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HEART AND SCIENCE

II.

WORKS BY WILKIE COLLINS.

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CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY, W.

HEART AND SCIENCE

A STORY OF THE PRESENT TIME

BY

WILKIE COLLINS



IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

London

CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY

1883

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HEART AND SCIENCE.

CHAPTER XXI.

ON the afternoon of the day that followed Ovid's departure, the three ladies of the household were in a state of retirement—each in her own room.

The writing-table in Mrs. Gallilee's boudoir was covered with letters. Her banker's pass-book and her cheque-book were on the desk ; Mr. Gallilee's affairs having been long since left as completely in the hands of his wife, as if Mr. Gallilee had been dead. A sheet of paper lay near the cheque-book, covered with calculations divided into two columns. The figures

in the right-hand column were contained in one line at the top of the page. The figures in the left-hand column filled the page from top to bottom. With her fan in her hand, and her pen in the ink-bottle, Mrs. Gallilee waited, steadily thinking.

It was the hottest day of the season. All the fat women in London fanned themselves on that sultry afternoon; and Mrs. Gallilee followed the general example. When she looked to the right, her calculations showed the balance at the bank. When she looked to the left, her calculations showed her debts: some partially paid, some not paid at all. If she wearied of the prospect thus presented, and turned for relief to her letters, she was confronted by polite requests for money; from tradespeople in the first place, and from secretaries of fashionable Charities in the second. Here and there, by way of variety, were invitations to parties, represent-

ing more pecuniary liabilities, incurred for new dresses, and for hospitalities acknowledged by dinners and conversaciones at her own house. Money that she owed, money that she must spend; nothing but outlay of money—and where was it to come from?

So far as her pecuniary resources were concerned, she was equally removed from hope and fear. Twice a year the same income flowed in regularly from the same investments. What she could pay at any future time was far more plainly revealed to her than what she might owe. With tact and management it would be possible to partially satisfy creditors, and keep up appearances for six months more. To that conclusion her reflections led her, and left her to write cheques.

And after the six months—what then?

Having first completed her correspondence with the tradespeople, and having next decided on her contributions to the Charities, this iron

matron took up her fan again, cooled herself, and met the question of the future face to face.

Ovid was the central figure in the prospect.

If he lived devoted to his profession, and lived unmarried, there was a last resource always left to Mrs. Gallilee. For years past, his professional gains had added largely to the income which he had inherited from his father. Unembarrassed by expensive tastes, he had some thousands of pounds put by—for the simple reason that he was at a loss what else to do with them. Thus far, her brother's generosity had spared Mrs. Gallilee the hard necessity of making a confession to her son. As things were now, she must submit to tell the humiliating truth; and Ovid (with no wife to check his liberal instincts) would do what Ovid's uncle (with no wife living to check *his* liberal instincts) had done already.

There was the prospect, if her son remained a bachelor. But her son had resolved to

marry Carmina. What would be the result if she was weak enough to allow it?

There would be, not one result, but three results. Natural ; Legal ; Pecuniary.

The natural result would be—children.

The legal result (if only one of those children lived) would be the loss to Mrs. Gallilee and her daughters of the splendid fortune reserved for them in the Will, if Carmina died without leaving offspring.

The pecuniary result would be (adding the husband's income to the wife's) about eight thousand a year for the young married people.

And how much for a loan, applicable to the mother-in-law's creditors? Judging Carmina by the standard of herself—by what other standard do we really judge our fellow-creatures, no matter how clever we may be?—Mrs. Gallilee decided that not one farthing would be left to help her to pay debts, which were steadily increasing with every new con-

cession that she made to the claims of society. Young Mrs. Ovid Vere, at the head of a household, would have the grand example of her other aunt before her eyes. Although her place of residence might not be a palace, she would be a poor creature indeed, if she failed to spend eight thousand a year, in the effort to be worthy of the social position of Lady Northlake. Add to these results of Ovid's contemplated marriage the loss of a thousand a year, secured to the guardian by the Will, while the ward remained under her care—and the statement of disaster would be complete. 'We must leave this house, and submit to be Lady Northlake's poor relations—there is the price I pay for it, if Ovid and Carmina become man and wife.'

She quietly laid aside her fan, as the thought in her completed itself in this form.

The trivial action, and the look which accompanied it, had a sinister meaning of their

own, beyond the reach of words. And Ovid was already on the sea. And Teresa was far away in Italy.

The clock on the mantelpiece struck five ; the punctual parlour-maid appeared with her mistress's customary cup of tea. Mrs. Gallilee asked for the governess. The servant answered that Miss Minerva was in her room.

‘ Where are the young ladies ? ’

‘ My master has taken them out for a walk.’

‘ Have they had their music lesson ? ’

‘ Not yet, ma’am. Mr. Le Frank left word yesterday that he would come at six this evening.’

‘ Does Mr. Gallilee know that ? ’

‘ I heard Miss Minerva tell my master, while I was helping the young ladies to get ready.’

‘ Very well. Ask Miss Minerva to come here, and speak to me.’

Miss Minerva sat at the open window of her bedroom, looking out vacantly at the backs of houses, in the street behind Fairfield Gardens.

The evil spirit was the dominant spirit in her again. She, too, was thinking of Ovid and Carmina. Her memory was busy with the parting scene on the previous day.

The more she thought of all that had happened in that short space of time, the more bitterly she reproached herself. Her one besetting weakness had openly degraded her, without so much as an attempt at resistance on her part. The fear of betraying herself if she took leave of the man she secretly loved, in the presence of his family, had forced her to ask a favour of Carmina, and to ask it under circumstances which might have led her rival to suspect the truth. Admitted to a private interview with Ovid, she had failed to control her agitation; and, worse still, in her un-

governable eagerness to produce a favourable impression on him at parting, she had promised—honestly promised, in that moment of impulse—to make Carmina's happiness her own peculiar care! Carmina, who had destroyed in a day the hope of years! Carmina, who had taken him away from her; who had clung round him when he ran upstairs, and had kissed him—fervently, shamelessly kissed him—before the servants in the hall!

She started to her feet, roused to a frenzy of rage by her own recollections. Standing at the window, she looked down at the pavement of the courtyard—it was far enough below to kill her instantly if she fell on it. Through the heat of her anger there crept the chill and stealthy prompting of despair. She leaned over the window-sill—she was not afraid—she might have done it, but for a trifling interruption. Somebody spoke outside.

It was the parlour-maid. Instead of enter-

ing the room, she spoke through the open door. The woman was one of Miss Minerva's many enemies in the house. 'Mrs. Gallilee wishes to see you,' she said—and shut the door again, the instant the words were out of her mouth.

Mrs. Gallilee!

The very name was full of promise at that moment. It suggested hope—merciless hope.

She left the window, and consulted her looking-glass. Even to herself, her haggard face was terrible to see. She poured eau-de-cologne and water into her basin, and bathed her burning head and eyes. Her shaggy black hair stood in need of attention next. She took almost as much pains with it as if she had been going into the presence of Ovid himself. 'I must make a calm appearance,' she thought, still as far as ever from suspecting that her employer had guessed her secret, 'or his mother may find me out.' Her knees trembled

under her. She sat down for a minute to rest.

Was she merely wanted for some ordinary domestic consultation? or was there really a chance of hearing the question of Ovid and Carmina brought forward at the coming interview?

She believed what she hoped: she believed that the time had come when Mrs. Gallilee had need of an ally—perhaps of an accomplice. Only let her object be the separation of the two cousins—and Miss Minerva was eager to help her, in either capacity. Suppose she was too cautious to mention her object? Miss Minerva was equally ready for her employer, in that case. The doubt which had prompted her fruitless suggestions to Carmina, when they were alone in the young girl's room—the doubt whether a clue to the discovery of Mrs. Gallilee's motives might not be found, in that latter part of the Will which she had failed to

overhear—was as present as ever in the governess's mind. 'The learned lady is not infallible,' she thought as she entered Mrs. Gallilee's room. 'If one unwary word trips over her tongue, I shall pick it up!'

Mrs. Gallilee's manner was encouraging at the outset. She had left her writing-table; and she now presented herself, reclining in an easy chair, weary and discouraged—the picture of a woman in want of a helpful friend.

'My head aches with adding up figures, and writing letters,' she said. 'I wish you would finish my correspondence for me.'

Miss Minerva took her place at the desk. She at once discovered the unfinished correspondence to be a false pretence. Three cheques for charitable subscriptions, due at that date, were waiting to be sent to three secretaries, with the customary letters. In five minutes, the letters were ready for the post. 'Anything more?' Miss Minerva asked.

‘Not that I remember. Do you mind giving me my fan? I feel perfectly helpless—I am wretchedly depressed to-day.’

‘The heat, perhaps?’

‘No. The expenses. Every year, the demands on our resources seem to increase. On principle, I dislike living up to our income—and I am obliged to do it.’

Here, plainly revealed to the governess’s experienced eyes, was another false pretence—used to introduce the true object of the interview, as something which might accidentally suggest itself in the course of conversation. Miss Minerva expressed the necessary regret with innocent readiness. ‘Might I suggest economy?’ she asked with impenetrable gravity.

‘Admirably advised,’ Mrs. Gallilee admitted; ‘but how is it to be done? Those subscriptions, for instance, are more than I ought to give. And what happens if I lower the amount? I

expose myself to unfavourable comparison with other people of our rank in society.'

Miss Minerva still patiently played the part expected of her. 'You might perhaps do with only one carriage-horse,' she remarked.

'My good creature, look at the people who have only one carriage-horse! Situated as I am, can I descend to that level? Don't suppose I care two straws about such things, myself. *My* one pride and pleasure in life is the pride and pleasure of improving my mind. But I have Lady Northlake for a sister; and I must not be entirely unworthy of my family connections. I have two daughters; and I must think of their interests. In a few years, Maria will be presented at Court. Thanks to you, she will be one of the most accomplished girls in England. Think of Maria's mother in a one-horse chaise. Dear child! tell me all about her lessons. Is she getting on as well as ever?'

‘Examine her yourself, Mrs. Gallilee. I can answer for the result.’

‘No, Miss Minerva ! I have too much confidence in you to do anything of the kind. Besides, in one of the most important of Maria’s accomplishments, I am entirely dependent on yourself. I know nothing of music. You are not responsible for her progress in that direction. Still, I should like to know if you are satisfied with Maria’s music ?’

‘Quite satisfied.’

‘You don’t think she is getting—how can I express it?—shall I say beyond the reach of Mr. Le Frank’s teaching ?’

‘Certainly not.’

‘Perhaps you would consider Mr. Le Frank equal to the instruction of an older and more advanced pupil than Maria ?’

Thus far, Miss Minerva had answered the questions submitted to her with well-concealed indifference. This last inquiry roused her atten-

tion. Why did Mrs. Gallilee 'show an interest, for the first time, in Mr. Le Frank's capacity as a teacher? Who was this 'older and more advanced pupil,' for whose appearance in the conversation the previous questions had so smoothly prepared the way? Feeling delicate ground under her, the governess advanced cautiously.

'I have always thought Mr. Le Frank an excellent teacher,' she said.

'Can you give me no more definite answer than that?' Mrs. Gallilee asked.

'I am quite unacquainted, madam, with the musical proficiency of the pupil to whom you refer. I don't even know (which adds to my perplexity) whether you are speaking of a lady or a gentleman.'

'I am speaking,' said Mrs. Gallilee quietly, 'of my niece, Carmina.'

Those words set all further doubt at rest in Miss Minerva's mind. Introduced by such

elaborate preparation, the allusion to Carmina's name could only lead, in due course, to the subject of Carmina's marriage. By indirect methods of approach, Mrs. Gallilee had at last reached the object that she had in view.

CHAPTER XXII.

THERE was an interval of silence between the two ladies.

MRS. Gallilee waited for Miss Minerva to speak next. Miss Minerva waited to be taken into MRS. Gallilee's confidence. The sparrows twittered in the garden ; and, far away in the schoolroom, the notes of the piano announced that the music lesson had begun.

‘The birds are noisy,’ said MRS. Gallilee.

‘And the piano sounds out of tune,’ Miss Minerva remarked.

There was no help for it. Either MRS. Gallilee must return to the matter in hand—or the matter in hand must drop.

‘I am afraid I have not made myself understood,’ she resumed.

‘I am afraid I have been very stupid,’ Miss Minerva confessed.

Resigning herself to circumstances, Mrs. Gallilee put the adjourned question under a new form. ‘We were speaking of Mr. Le Frank as a teacher, and of my niece as a pupil,’ she said. ‘Have you been able to form any opinion of Carmina’s musical abilities?’

Miss Minerva remained as prudent as ever. She answered, ‘I have had no opportunity of forming an opinion.’

Mrs. Gallilee met this cautious reply by playing her trump card. She handed a letter to Miss Minerva. ‘I have received a proposal from Mr. Le Frank,’ she said. ‘Will you tell me what you think of it?’

The letter was short and servile. Mr. Le Frank presented his best respects. If Mrs. Gallilee’s charming niece stood in need of

musical instruction, he ventured to hope that he might have the honour and happiness of superintending her studies. Looking back to the top of the letter, the governess discovered that this modest request bore a date of eight days since. 'Have you written to Mr. Le Frank?' she asked.

'Only to say that I will take his request into consideration,' Mrs. Gallilee replied.

Had she waited for her son's departure, before she committed herself to a decision? On the chance that this might be the case, Miss Minerva consulted her memory. When Mrs. Gallilee first decided on engaging a music-master to teach the children, her son had disapproved of employing Mr. Le Frank. This circumstance might possibly be worth bearing in mind. 'Do you see any objection to accepting Mr. Le Frank's proposal?' Mrs. Gallilee asked. Miss Minerva saw an objection forthwith, and, thanks to her effort of memory,

discovered an especially mischievous way of stating it. 'I feel a certain delicacy in offering an opinion,' she said modestly.

Mrs. Gallilee was surprised. 'Do you allude to Mr. Le Frank?' she inquired.

'No. I don't doubt that his instructions would be of service to any young lady.'

'Are you thinking of my niece?'

'No, Mrs. Gallilee. I am thinking of your son.'

'In what way, if you please?'

'In this way. I believe your son would object to employing Mr. Le Frank as Miss Carmina's teacher.'

'On musical grounds?'

'No ; on personal grounds.'

'What do you mean?'

Miss Minerva explained her meaning. 'I think you have forgotten what happened, when you first employed Mr. Le Frank to teach Maria and Zoe. His personal appearance pro-

duced an unfavourable impression on your son ; and Mr. Ovid made certain inquiries which you had not thought necessary. Pardon me if I persist in mentioning the circumstances. I owe it to myself to justify my opinion—an opinion, you will please to remember, that I did not volunteer. Mr. Ovid's investigations brought to light a very unpleasant report, relating to Mr. Le Frank and a young lady who had been one of his pupils.'

'An abominable slander, Miss Minerva ! I am surprised that you should refer to it.'

'I am referring, madam, to the view of the matter taken by Mr. Ovid. If Mr. Le Frank had failed to defend himself successfully, he would of course not have been received into this house. But your son had his own opinion of the defence. I was present at the time, and I heard him say that, if Maria and Zoe had been older, he should have advised employing a music-master who had no false reports against

him to contradict. As they were only children, he would say nothing more. That is what I had in my mind, when I gave my opinion. I think Mr. Ovid will be annoyed when he hears that Mr. Le Frank is his cousin's music-master. And, if any foolish gossip reaches him in his absence, I fear it might lead to mischievous results—I mean, to misunderstandings not easily set right by correspondence, and quite likely therefore to lead, in the end, to distrust and jealousy.'

There she paused, and crossed her hands on her lap, and waited for what was to come next.

If Mrs. Gallilee could have looked into her mind at that moment, as well as into her face, she would have read Miss Minerva's thoughts in these plain terms: 'All this time, madam, you have been keeping up appearances in the face of detection. You are going to use Mr. Le Frank as a means of making mischief

between Ovid and Carmina. If you had taken me into your confidence, I might have been willing to help you. As it is, please observe that I am not caught in the trap you have set for me. If Mr. Ovid discovers your little plot, you can't lay the blame on your governess's advice.'

Mrs. Gallilee felt that she had again measured herself with Miss Minerva, and had again been beaten. She had confidently reckoned on the governess's secret feeling towards her son to encourage, without hesitation or distrust, any project for promoting the estrangement of Ovid and Carmina. There was no alternative now but to put her first obstacle in the way of the marriage, on her own sole responsibility.

'I don't doubt that you have spoken sincerely,' she said; 'but you have failed to do justice to my son's good sense; and you are—naturally enough, in your position—incapable

of estimating his devoted attachment to Carmina.' Having planted that sting, she paused to observe the effect. Not the slightest visible result rewarded her. She went on. 'Almost the last words he said to me expressed his confidence—his affectionate confidence—in my niece. The bare idea of his being jealous of anybody, and especially of such a person as Mr. Le Frank, is simply ridiculous. I am astonished that you don't see it in that light.'

'I should see it in that light as plainly as you do,' Miss Minerva quietly replied, 'if Mr. Ovid was at home.'

'What difference does that make?'

'Excuse me—it makes a great difference, as I think. He has gone away on a long journey, and gone away in bad health. He will have his hours of depression. At such times, trifles are serious things; and even well-meant words—in letters—are sometimes misunderstood. I

can offer no better apology for what I have said ; and I can only regret that I have made so unsatisfactory a return for your flattering confidence in me.'

Having planted *her* sting, she rose to retire.

'Have you any further commands for me?' she asked.

'I should like to be quite sure that I have not misunderstood you,' said Mrs. Gallilee. 'You consider Mr. Le Frank to be competent, as director of any young lady's musical studies? Thank you. On the one point on which I wished to consult you, my mind is at ease. Do you know where Carmina is?'

'In her room, I believe.'

'Will you have the goodness to send her here?'

'With the greatest pleasure. Good-evening!'

So ended Mrs. Gallilee's first attempt to make use of Miss Minerva, without trusting her.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE mistress of the house, and the governess of the house, had their own special reasons for retiring to their own rooms. Carmina was in solitude as a matter of necessity. The only friends that the poor girl could gather round her now, were the absent and the dead.

She had written to Ovid—merely for the pleasure of thinking that her letter would accompany him, in the mail-steamer which took him to Quebec. She had written to Teresa. She had opened her piano, and had played the divinely beautiful music of Mozart, until its tenderness saddened her, and she closed the instrument with an aching heart. For a while she sat by the window, thinking of Ovid. The decline of

day has its melancholy affinities with the decline of life. As the evening wore on, her loneliness had become harder and harder to endure. She rang for the maid, and asked if Miss Minerva was at leisure. Miss Minerva had been sent for by Mrs. Gallilee. Where was Zo? In the schoolroom, waiting until Mr. Le Frank had done with Maria, to take her turn at the piano. Left alone again, Carmina opened her locket, and put Ovid's portrait by it on the table. Her sad fancy revived her dead parents—imagined her lover being presented to them—saw him winning their hearts by his genial voice, his sweet smile, his wise and kindly words. Miss Minerva, entering the room, found her still absorbed in her own little melancholy day-dream; recalling the absent, reviving the dead—as if she had been nearing the close of life. And only seventeen years old. Alas for Carmina, only seventeen!

‘Mrs. Gallilee wishes to see you.’

She started. 'Is there anything wrong?' she asked.

'No. What makes you think so?'

'You speak in such a strange way. Oh, Frances, I have been longing for you to keep me company! And now you are here, you look at me as coldly as if I had offended you. Perhaps you are not well?'

'That's it. I am not well.'

'Have some of my lavender water! Let me bathe your forehead, and then blow on it to cool you this hot weather. No? Sit down, dear, at any rate. What does my aunt want with me?'

'I think I had better not tell you.'

'Why?'

'Your aunt is sure to ask you what I have said. I have tried her temper; you know what her temper is! She has sent me here instead of sending the maid, on the chance that I may commit some imprudence. I give you

her message exactly as the servant might have given it—and you can tell her so with a safe conscience. No more questions !’

‘ One more, please. Is it anything about Ovid ? ’

‘ No.’

‘ Then my aunt can wait a little. Do sit down ! I want to speak to you.’

‘ About what ? ’

‘ About Ovid, of course ! ’

Carmina’s look and tone at once set Miss Minerva’s mind at ease. Her conduct, on the day of Ovid’s departure, had aroused no jealous suspicion in her innocent rival. She refused to take the offered chair.

‘ I have already told you your aunt is out of temper,’ she said. ‘ Go to her at once.’

Carmina rose unwillingly. ‘ There were so many things I wanted to say to you,’ she began—and was interrupted by a rapid little series of knocks at the door. Was the person in a

hurry? The person proved to be the discreet and accomplished Maria. She made her excuses to Carmina with sweetness, and turned to Miss Minerva with sorrow.

‘I regret to say that you are wanted in the schoolroom. Mr. Le Frank can do nothing with Zoe. Oh, dear!’ She sighed over her sister’s wickedness, and waited for instructions.

To be called away, under any circumstances, was a relief to Miss Minerva. Carmina’s affectionate welcome had irritated her in the most incomprehensible manner. She was angry with herself for being irritated; she felt inclined to abuse the girl for believing in her. ‘You fool, why don’t you see through me? Why don’t you write to that other fool who is in love with you, and tell him how I hate you both?’ But for her self-command, she might have burst out with such mad words as those. Maria’s appearance was inexpress-

sibly welcome. ‘Say I will follow you directly,’ she answered.

Maria, in the language of the stage, made a capital exit. With a few hurried words of apology, Miss Minerva prepared to follow. Carmina stopped her at the door.

‘Don’t be hard on Zo!’ she said.

‘I must do my duty,’ Miss Minerva answered sternly.

‘We were sometimes naughty ourselves when we were children,’ Carmina pleaded. ‘And only the other day she had bread and water for tea. I am so fond of Zo! And besides——’ she looked doubtfully at Miss Minerva—‘I don’t think Mr. Le Frank is the sort of man to get on with children.’

After what had just passed between Mrs. Gallilee and herself, this expression of opinion excited the governess’s curiosity. ‘What makes you say that?’ she asked.

‘Well, my dear, for one thing Mr. Le

Frank is so ugly. Don't you agree with me?'

'I think you had better keep your opinion to yourself. If he heard of it——'

'Is he vain? My poor father used to say that all bad musicians were vain.'

'You don't call Mr. Le Frank a bad musician?'

'Oh, but I do! I heard him at his concert. Mere execution of the most mechanical kind. A musical box is as good as that man's playing. This is how he does it!'

Her girlish good spirits had revived in her friend's company. She turned gaily to the piano, and amused herself by imitating Mr. Le Frank.

Another knock at the door—a single peremptory knock this time—stopped the performance.

Miss Minerva had left the door ajar, when Carmina had prevented her from quitting the

room. She looked through the open space, and discovered—Mr. Le Frank.

His bald head trembled, his florid complexion was livid with suppressed rage. ‘That little devil has run away!’ he said—and hurried down the stairs again, as if he dare not trust himself to utter a word more.

‘Has he heard me?’ Carmina asked in dismay.

‘He may only have heard you playing.’

Offering this hopeful suggestion, Miss Minerva felt no doubt, in her own mind, that Mr. Le Frank was perfectly well acquainted with Carmina’s opinion of him. It was easy enough to understand that he should himself inform the governess of an incident, so entirely beyond the reach of his own interference as the flight of Zo. But it was impossible to assume that the furious anger which his face betrayed, could have been excited by a child who had run away from a lesson. No: the

vainest of men and musicians had heard that he was ugly, and that his pianoforte-playing resembled the performance of a musical box.

They left the room together—Carmina, ill at ease, to attend on her aunt; Miss Minerva, pondering on what had happened, to find the fugitive Zo.

The footman had already spared her the trouble of searching the house. He had seen Zo running out bare-headed into the Square, and had immediately followed her. The young rebel was locked up. ‘I don’t care,’ said Zo; ‘I hate Mr. Le Frank!’ Miss Minerva’s mind was too seriously preoccupied to notice this aggravation of her pupil’s offence. One subject absorbed her attention—the interview then in progress between Carmina and her aunt.

How would Mrs. Gallilee’s scheme prosper now? Mr. Le Frank might, or might not,

consent to be Carmina's teacher. Another result, however, was certain. Miss Minerva thoroughly well knew the vindictive nature of the man. He neither forgave nor forgot—he was Carmina's enemy for life.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE month of July was near its end.

On the morning of the twenty-eighth, Carmina was engaged in replying to a letter received from Teresa. Her answer contained a record of domestic events, during an interval of serious importance in her life under Mrs. Gallilee's roof. Translated from the Italian, the letter was expressed in these terms :

‘ Are you vexed with me, dearest, for this late reply to your sad news from Italy ? I have but one excuse to offer.

‘ Can I hear of your anxiety about your husband, and not feel the wish to help you to bear your burden by writing cheerfully of

myself? Over and over again, I have thought of you and have opened my desk. My spirits have failed me, and I have shut it up again. Am I now in a happier frame of mind? Yes, my good old nurse, I am happier. I have had a letter from Ovid.

‘He has arrived safely at Quebec, and he is beginning to feel better already, after the voyage. You cannot imagine how beautifully, how tenderly he writes! I am almost reconciled to his absence, when I read his letter. Will that give you some idea of the happiness and the consolation that I owe to this best and dearest of men?

‘Ah, my old granny, I see you start, and make that favourite mark with your thumb-nail under the word “consolation”! I hear you say to yourself, “Is she unhappy in her English home? And is Aunt Gallilee to blame for it?” Yes! it is even so. What I would not for the whole world write to Ovid, I may confess to

you. Aunt Gallilee is indeed a hard, hard woman.

‘Do you remember telling me, in your dear downright way, that Mr. Le Frank looked like a rogue? I don’t know whether he is a rogue—but I do know that it is through his conduct that my aunt is offended with me.

‘It happened three weeks ago.

‘She sent for me, and said that my education must be completed, and that my music in particular must be attended to. I was quite willing to obey her, and I said so with all needful readiness and respect. She answered that she had already chosen a music-master for me—and then, to my astonishment, she mentioned his name. Mr. Le Frank, who taught her children, was also to teach me! I have plenty of faults, but I really think vanity is not one of them. It is only due to my excellent master in Italy to say, that I am a better pianoforte player than Mr. Le Frank.

‘I never breathed a word of this, mind, to my aunt. It would have been ungrateful and useless. She knows and cares nothing about music.

‘So we parted good friends, and she wrote the same evening to engage my master. The next day she got his reply. Mr. Le Frank refused to be my professor of music—and this, after he had himself proposed to teach me, in a letter addressed to my aunt! Being asked for his reasons, he made an excuse. The spare time at his disposal, when he had written, had been since occupied by another pupil. The true reason for his conduct is, that he heard me speak of him—rashly enough, I don’t deny it—as an ugly man and a bad player. Miss Minerva sounded him on the subject, at my request, for the purpose of course of making my apologies. He affected not to understand what she meant—with what motive I am sure I don’t know. False and revengeful, you may

say, and perhaps you may be right. But the serious part of it, so far as I am concerned, is my aunt's behaviour to me. If I had thwarted her in the dearest wish of her life, she could hardly treat me with greater coldness and severity. She has not stirred again, in the matter of my education. We only meet at meal-times; and she receives me, when I sit down at table, as she might receive a perfect stranger. Her icy civility is unendurable. And this woman is my darling Ovid's mother!

‘Have I done with my troubles now? No, Teresa; not even yet. Oh, how I wish I was with you in Italy!

‘Your letters persist in telling me that I am deluded in believing Miss Minerva to be truly my friend. Do pray remember—even if I am wrong—what a solitary position mine is, in Mrs. Gallilee's house! I can play with dear little Zo; but whom can I talk to, whom can I

confide in, if it turns out that Miss Minerva has been deceiving me?

‘When I last wrote to you, I refused to acknowledge that any such dreadful discovery as this could be possible; I resented the bare idea of it as a cruel insult to my friend. Since that time—my face burns with shame while I write it—I am a little, just a little, shaken in my own opinion.

‘Shall I tell you how it began? Yes; I will.

‘My good old friend, you have your prejudices. But you speak your mind truly—and whom else can I consult? Not Ovid! The one effort of my life is to prevent him from feeling anxious about me. And, besides, I have contended against his opinion of Miss Minerva, and have brought him to think of her more kindly. Has he been right, notwithstanding? and are you right? And am I alone wrong? You shall judge for yourself.

‘Miss Minerva began to change towards me, after I had done the thing of all others which ought to have brought us closer together than ever. She is very poorly paid by my aunt, and she has been worried by little debts. When she owned this, I most willingly lent her the money to pay her bills—a mere trifle, only thirty pounds. What do you think she did? She crushed up the bank-notes in her hand, and left the room in the strangest headlong manner—as if I had insulted her instead of helping her! All the next day, she avoided me. The day after, I myself went to her room, and asked what was the matter. She gave me a most extraordinary answer. She said, “I don’t know which of us two I most detest—myself or you. Myself for borrowing your money, or you for lending it.” I left her; not feeling offended, only bewildered and distressed. More than an hour passed before she made her excuses. “I am ill and miser-

able"—that was all she said. She did indeed look so wretched that I forgave her directly. Would you not have done so too, in my place?

‘This happened a fortnight since. Only yesterday, she broke out again, and put my affection for her to a far more severe trial. I have not got over it yet.

‘There was a message for her in Ovid’s letter—expressed in the friendliest terms. He remembered with gratitude her kind promise, on saying good-bye ; he believed she would do all that lay in her power to make my life happy in his absence ; and he only regretted her leaving him in such haste that he had no time to thank her personally. Such was the substance of the message. I was proud and pleased to go to her room myself, and read it to her.

‘Can you guess how she received me? Nobody—I say it positively—nobody could guess.

‘She actually flew into a rage! Not only with me (which I might have pardoned), but with Ovid (which is perfectly inexcusable). “How dare he write to *you*,” she burst out, “of what I said to him when we took leave of each other? And how dare you come here, and read it to me? What do I care about your life, in his absence? Of what earthly consequence are his remembrance and his gratitude to Me!” She spoke of him, with such fury and such contempt, that she roused me at last. I said to her, “You abominable woman, there is but one excuse for you—you’re mad!” I left the room—and didn’t I bang the door! We have not met since. Let me hear your opinion, Teresa. I was in a passion when I told her she was mad; but was I altogether wrong? Do you really think the poor creature is in her right senses?

‘Looking back at your letter, I see that you ask if I have made any new acquaintances.

‘I have been introduced to one of the sweetest women I ever met with. And who do you think she is? My other aunt—Mrs. Gallilee’s younger sister, Lady Northlake! They say she was not so handsome as Mrs. Gallilee, when they were both young. For my part, I can only declare that no such comparison is possible between them now. In look, in voice, in manner there is something so charming in Lady Northlake that I quite despair of describing it. My father used to say that she was amiable and weak; led by her husband, and easily imposed upon. I am not clever enough to have his eye for character: and perhaps I am weak and easily imposed upon too. Before I had been ten minutes in Lady Northlake’s company, I would have given everything I possess in the world to have had *her* for my guardian.

‘She had called to say good-bye, on leaving London; and my aunt was not at home. We

had a long delightful talk together. She asked me so kindly to visit her in Scotland, and be introduced to Lord Northlake, that I accepted the invitation with a glad heart.

‘When my aunt returned, I quite forgot that we were on bad terms. I gave her an enthusiastic account of all that had passed between her sister and myself. How do you think she met this little advance on my part? She positively refused to let me go to Scotland.

‘As soon as I had in some degree got over my disappointment, I asked for her reasons. “I am your guardian,” she said; “and I am acting in the exercise of my own discretion. I think it better you should stay with me.” I made no further remark. My aunt’s cruelty made me think of my dead father’s kindness. It was as much as I could do to keep from crying.

‘Thinking over it afterwards, I supposed (as this is the season when everybody leaves town) that she had arranged to take me into

the country with her. Mr. Gallilee, who is always good to me, thought so too, and promised me some sailing at the sea-side. To the astonishment of everybody, she has not shown any intention of going away from London! Even the servants ask what it means.

‘This is a letter of complaints. Am I adding to your anxieties instead of relieving them? My kind old nurse, there is no need to be anxious. At the worst of my little troubles, I have only to think of Ovid—and his mother’s ice melts away from me directly; I feel brave enough to endure anything.

‘Take my heart’s best love, dear—no, next best love, after Ovid!—and give some of it to your poor suffering husband. May I ask one little favour? The English gentleman who has taken our old house at Rome, will not object to give you a few flowers out of what was once my garden. Send them to me in your next letter.’

CHAPTER XXV.

ON the twelfth of August, Carmina heard from Ovid again. He wrote from Montreal; describing the presentation of that letter of introduction which he had once been tempted to destroy. In the consequences that followed the presentation—apparently harmless consequences at the time—the destinies of Ovid, of Carmina, and of Benjulia proved to be seriously involved.

Ovid's letter was thus expressed :

‘ I want to know, my love, if there is any other man in the world who is as fond of his darling as I am of you? If such a person exists, and if adverse circumstances compel

him to travel, I should like to ask a question. Is he perpetually calling to mind forgotten things, which he ought to have said to his sweetheart before he left her?

‘This is my case. Let me give you an instance.

‘I have made a new friend here—one Mr. Morphew. Last night, he was so kind as to invite me to a musical entertainment at his house. He is a medical man; and he amuses himself in his leisure hours by playing on that big and dreary member of the family of fiddles, whose name is Violoncello. Assisted by friends, he hospitably cools his guests, in the hot season, by the amateur performance of quartettes. My dear, I passed a delightful evening. Listening to the music? Not listening to a single note of it. Thinking of You.

‘Have I roused your curiosity? I fancy I can see your eyes brighten; I fancy I can hear you telling me to go on!

‘My thoughts reminded me that music is one of the enjoyments of your life. Before I went away, I ought to have remembered this, and to have told you that the manager of the autumn concerts at the opera-house is an old friend of mine. He will be only too glad to place a box at your disposal, on any night when his programme attracts your notice; I have already made amends for my forgetfulness, by writing to him by this mail. Miss Minerva will be your companion at the theatre. If Mr. Le Frank (who is sure to be on the free list) pays you a visit in your box, tell him from me to put a wig on his bald head, and to try if *that* will make him look like an honest man!

‘Did I forget anything else before my departure? Did I tell you how precious you are to me? how beautiful you are to me? how entirely worthless my life is without you? I dare say I did; but I tell it all over again—

and, when you are tired of the repetition, you have only to let me know.

‘In the meanwhile, have I nothing else to say? have I no travelling adventures to relate? You insist on hearing of everything that happens to me; and you are to have your own way before we are married, as well as after. My sweet Carmina, your willing slave has something more serious than common travelling adventures to relate—he has a confession to make. In plain words, I have been practising my profession again, in the city of Montreal!

‘I wonder whether you will forgive me, when you are informed of the circumstances? It is a sad little story; but I am vain enough to think that my part in it will interest you. I have been a vain man, since that brightest and best of all possible days when you first made *your* confession—when you said that you loved me.

‘ Look back in my letter, and you will see Mr. Morpew mentioned as a new friend of mine, in Canada. I became acquainted with him through a letter of introduction, given to me by Benjulia.

‘ Say nothing to anybody of what I am now going to tell you—and be especially careful, if you happen to see him, to keep Benjulia in the dark. I sincerely hope you will not see him. He is a hard-hearted man—and he might say something which would distress you, if he knew of the result which has followed his opening to me the door of his friend’s house.

‘ Mr. Morpew is a worthy busy old gentleman, who follows his professional routine, and whose medical practice consists principally in bringing infant Canadians into the world. His services happened to be specially in request, at the time when I made his acquaintance. He was called away from his table, on the day after the musical party, when I dined with

him. I was the only guest—and his wife was left to entertain me.

‘The good lady began by speaking of Benjamin. She roundly declared him to be a brute—and she produced my letter of introduction (closed by the doctor’s own hand, before he gave it to me) as a proof. Would you like to read the letter, too? Here is a copy:—“The man who brings this is an overworked surgeon, named Ovid Vere. He wants rest and good air. Don’t encourage him to use his brains; and give him information enough to take him, by the shortest way, to the biggest desert in Canada.” You will now understand that I am indebted to myself for the hospitable reception which has detained me at Montreal.

‘To return to my story. Mr. Morpew’s services were again in request, ten minutes after he had left the house. This time the patient was a man—and the messenger declared that he was at the point of death.

‘Mrs. Morphew seemed to be at a loss what to do. “In this dreadful case,” she said, “death is a mercy. What I cannot bear to think of is the poor man’s lonely position. In his last moments, there will not be a living creature at his bedside.”

‘Hearing this, I ventured to make some inquiries. The answers painted such a melancholy picture of poverty and suffering, and so vividly reminded me of a similar case in my own experience, that I forgot I was an invalid myself, and volunteered to visit the dying man in Mr. Morphew’s place.

‘The messenger led me to the poorest quarter of the city, and to a garret in one of the wretchedest houses in the street. There he lay, without anyone to nurse him, on a mattress on the floor. What his malady was, you will not ask to know. I will only say that any man but a doctor would have run out of the room, the moment he entered it. To save the poor

creature was impossible. For a few days longer, I could keep pain in subjection, and could make death easy when it came.

‘ At my next visit he was able to speak.

‘ I discovered that he was a member of my own profession—a mulatto from the Southern States of America, by birth. The one fatal event of his life had been his marriage. Every worst offence of which a bad woman can be guilty, his vile wife had committed—and his infatuated love clung to her through it all. She had disgraced and ruined him. Not once, but again and again he had forgiven her, under circumstances which degraded him in his own estimation, and in the estimation of his best friends. On the last occasion when she left him, he had followed her to Montreal. In a fit of drunken frenzy, she had freed him from her at last by self-destruction. Her death affected his reason. When he was discharged from the asylum, he spent his last miserable savings in

placing a monument over her grave. As long as his strength held out, he made daily pilgrimages to the cemetery. And now, when the shadow of death was darkening over him, his one motive for clinging to life, his one reason for vainly entreating me to cure him, still centred in devotion to the memory of his wife. "Nobody will take care of her grave," he said, "when I am gone."

'My love, I have always thought fondly of you. After hearing this miserable story, my heart overflowed with gratitude to God for giving me Carmina.

'He died yesterday. His last words implored me to have him buried in the same grave with the woman who had dishonoured him. Who am I that I should judge him? Besides, I shall fulfil his last wishes as a thank-offering for You.

'There is still something more to tell.

'On the day before his death he asked me

to open an old portmanteau—literally, the one thing that he possessed. He had no money left, and no clothes. In a corner of the portmanteau there was a roll of papers, tied with a piece of string—and that was all.

“I can make you but one return,” he said ; “I give you my book.”

‘He was too weak to tell me what the book was about, or to express any wish relative to its publication. I am ashamed to say I set no sort of value on the manuscript presented to me—except as a memorial of a sad incident in my life. Waking earlier than usual this morning, I opened and examined my gift for the first time.

‘To my amazement, I found myself rewarded a hundredfold for the little that I had been able to do. This unhappy man must have been possessed of abilities which (under favouring circumstances) would, I don’t hesitate to say, have ranked him among the greatest physicians of our time. The language in which

he writes is obscure, and sometimes grammatically incorrect. But he, and he alone, has solved a problem in the treatment of disease, which has thus far been the despair of medical men throughout the whole civilised world.

‘If a stranger was looking over my shoulder, he would be inclined to say, This curious lover writes to his young lady as if she was a medical colleague! We understand each other, Carmina, don’t we? My future career is an object of interest to my future wife. This poor fellow’s gratitude has opened new prospects to me; and who will be so glad to hear of it as you?’

‘Before I close my letter, you will expect me to say a word more about my health. Sometimes I feel well enough to take my cabin in the next vessel that sails for Liverpool. But there are other occasions, particularly when I happen to over-exert myself in walking or riding, which warn me to be careful and

patient. My next journey will take me inland, to the mighty plains and forests of this grand country. When I have breathed the health-giving air of those regions, I shall be able to write definitely of the blessed future day which is to unite us once more.

‘My mother has, I suppose, given her usual *conversazione* at the end of the season. Let me hear how you like the scientific people at close quarters, and let me give you a useful hint. When you meet in society with a particularly positive man, who looks as if he was sitting for his photograph, you may safely set that man down as a Professor.

‘Seriously, I do hope that you and my mother get on well together. You say too little of each other in your letters to me, and I am sometimes troubled by misgivings. There is another odd circumstance, connected with our correspondence, which sets me wondering. I always send messages to Miss Minerva; and

Miss Minerva never sends any messages back to me. Do you forget? or am I an object of perfect indifference to your friend?

‘My latest news of you all is from Zo. She has sent me a letter, in one of the envelopes that I directed for her when I went away. Miss Minerva’s hair would stand on end if she could see the blots and the spelling. Zo’s account of the family circle (turned into intelligible English), will I think personally interest you. Here it is, in its own Roman brevity—with your pretty name shortened by two syllables: “Except Pa and Car, we are a bad lot at home.” After that, I can add nothing that is worth reading.

‘Take the kisses, my angel, that I leave for you on the blank morsel of paper below, and love me as I love you. There is a world of meaning, Carmina, even in those commonplace words. Oh, if I could only go to you by the mail steamer, in the place of my letter!’

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE answers to Ovid's questions were not to be found in Carmina's reply. She had reasons for not mentioning the conversazione; and she shrank from writing to him of his mother. Her true position in Mrs. Gallilee's house—growing, day by day, harder and harder to endure; threatening, more and more plainly, complications and perils to come—was revealed in her next letter to her old friend in Italy. She wrote to Teresa in these words:

‘If you love me, forget the inhuman manner in which I have spoken of Miss Minerva!’

‘After I had written to you, I would have recalled my letter, if it could have been done. I began, that evening, to feel ashamed of what

I had said in my anger. As the hours went on, and bedtime approached, I became so wretched that I ran the risk of another harsh reception, by intruding on her once more. It was a circumstance in my favour that she was, to all appearance, in bad spirits too. There was something in her voice, when she asked what I wanted, which made me think—though she looks like the last person in the world to be guilty of such weakness—that she had been crying.

‘I gave the best expression I could to my feelings of repentance and regret. What I actually said to her, has slipped out of my memory ; I was frightened and upset—and I am always stupid in that condition. My attempt at reconciliation may have been clumsy enough ; but she might surely have seen that I had no intention to mystify and distress her. And yet, what else could she have imagined?—to judge by her own actions and words.

‘Her bedroom candle was on the table behind me. She snatched it up and held it before my face, and looked at me as if I was some extraordinary object that she had never seen or heard of before! “You are little better than a child,” she said; “I have ten times your strength of will—what is there in you that I can’t resist? Go away from me! Be on your guard against me! I am false; I am suspicious; I am cruel. You simpleton, have you no instincts to protect you? Is there nothing in you that shrinks from me?”

‘She put down the candle, and burst into a wretched mocking laugh. “There she stands,” cried this strange creature, “and looks at me with the eyes of a baby that sees something new! I can’t frighten her. I can’t disgust her. What does it mean?” She dropped into a chair; her voice sank almost to a whisper—I should have thought she was afraid of me, if such a thing had been possible. “What do

you know of me, that I don't know of myself?" she asked.

'It was quite beyond me to understand what she meant. I took a chair, and sat down by her. "I only know what you said to me yesterday," I answered.

"What did I say?"

"You told me you were miserable."

"I told you a lie! Believe what I have said to you to-day. In your own interests, believe it to be the truth!"

'Nothing would induce me to believe it. "No," I said. "You were miserable yesterday, and you are miserable to-day. *That* is the truth!"

'What put my next bold words into my head, I don't know. It doesn't matter; the thought was in me—and out it came.

"I think you have some burden on your mind," I went on. "If I can't relieve you of it, perhaps I can help you to bear it. Come!

tell me what it is." I waited ; but it was of no use—she never even looked at me. Because I am in love myself, do I think everybody else is like me? I thought she blushed. I don't know what else I thought. "Are you in love?" I asked.

'She jumped up from her chair, so suddenly and so violently that she threw it on the floor. Still, not a word passed her lips. I found courage enough to go on—but not courage enough to look at her.

"I love Ovid, and Ovid loves me," I said. "There is my consolation, whatever my troubles may be. Are you not so fortunate?" A dreadful expression of pain passed over her face. How could I see it, and not feel the wish to sympathise with her? I ran the risk, and said, "Do you love somebody, who doesn't love you?"

'She turned her back on me, and went to the toilet-table. I think she looked at herself

in the glass. "Well," she said, speaking to me at last, "what else?"

"Nothing else," I answered—"except that I hope I have not offended you."

"She left the glass as suddenly as she had approached it, and took up the candle again. Once more she held it so that it lit my face.

"Guess who he is," she said.

"How can I do that?" I asked.

"She quietly put down the candle again. In some way, quite incomprehensible to myself, I seemed to have relieved her. She spoke to me in a changed voice, gently and sadly.

"You are the best of good girls, and you mean kindly. It's of no use—you can do nothing. Forgive my insolence yesterday; I was mad with envy of your happy marriage engagement. You don't understand such a nature as mine. So much the better! ah, so much the better! Good-night!"

‘ There was such hopeless submission, such patient suffering, in those words, that I could not find it in my heart to leave her. I thought of how I might have behaved, of the wild things I might have said, if Ovid had cared nothing for me. Had some cruel man forsaken her? That was *her* secret. I asked myself what I could do to encourage her. Your last letter, with our old priest’s enclosure, was in my pocket. I took it out.

‘ “ Would you mind reading a short letter,” I said, “ before we wish each other good-night?” I held out the priest’s letter.

‘ She drew back with a dark look; she appeared to have some suspicion of it. “ Who is the writer?” she inquired sharply.

‘ “ A person who is a stranger to you.”

‘ Her face cleared directly. She took the letter from me, and waited to hear what I had to say next. “ The person,” I told her, “ is a wise and good old man—the priest who mar-

ried my father and mother, and baptised me. We all of us used to consult Father Patrizio, when we wanted advice. My nurse Teresa felt anxious about me in Ovid's absence; she spoke to him about my marriage engagement, and of my exile—forgive me for using the word!—in this house. He said he would consider, before he gave her his opinion. The next day, he sent her the letter which you have got in your hand."

‘There, I came to a full stop; having something yet to say, but not knowing how to express myself with the necessary delicacy.

““Why do you wish me to read the letter?” she asked, quietly.

““I think there is something in it which might——.”

‘There, like a fool, I came to another full stop. She was as patient as ever; she only made a little sign to me to go on.

““I think Father Patrizio's letter might

put you in a better frame of mind," I said ; " it might keep you from despising yourself."

' She went back to her chair, and read the letter. You have permitted me to keep the comforting words of the good Father, among my other treasures. I copy his letter for you in this place—so that you may read it again, and see what I had in my mind, and understand how it affected poor Miss Minerva.

' " Teresa, my well-beloved friend,—I have considered the anxieties that trouble you, with this result : that I can do my best, conscientiously, to quiet your mind. I have had the experience of forty years in the duties of the priesthood. In that long time, the innermost secrets of thousands of men and women have been confided to me. From such means of observation, I have drawn many useful conclusions ; and some of them may be also useful to you. I will put what I have to say, in the plainest and fewest words : consider them care-

fully, on your side. The growth of the better nature, in women, is perfected by one influence --and that influence is Love. Are you surprised that a priest should write in this way? Did you expect me to say, Religion? Love, my sister, *is* Religion, in women. It opens their hearts to all that is good for them; and it acts independently of the conditions of human happiness. A miserable woman, tormented by hopeless love, is still the better and the nobler for that love; and a time will surely come when she will show it. You have fears for Carmina—cast away, poor soul, among strangers with hard hearts! I tell you to have no fears. She may suffer under trials; she may sink under trials. But the strength to rise again is in her—and that strength is Love.”

‘Having read our old friend’s letter, Miss Minerva turned back, and read it again—and waited a little, repeating some part of it to herself.

“Does it encourage you?” I asked.

‘She handed the letter back to me. “I have got one sentence in it by heart,” she said.

‘You will know what that sentence is, without my telling you. I felt so relieved, when I saw the change in her for the better—I was so inexpressibly happy in the conviction that we were as good friends again as ever—that I bent down to kiss her, on saying good-night.

‘She put up her hand and stopped me. “No,” she said, “not till I have done something to deserve it. You are more in need of help than you think. Stay here a little longer; I have a word to say to you about your aunt.”

‘I returned to my chair, feeling a little startled. Her eyes rested on me absently—she was, as I imagined, considering with herself, before she spoke. I refrained from inter-

rupting her thoughts. The night was still and dark. Not a sound reached our ears from without. In the house, the silence was softly broken by a rustling movement on the stairs. It came nearer. The door was opened suddenly. Mrs. Gallilee entered the room.

‘What folly possessed me? Why was I frightened? I really could not help it—I screamed. My aunt walked straight up to me, without taking the smallest notice of Miss Minerva. “What are you doing here, when you ought to be in your bed?” she asked.

‘She spoke in such an imperative manner—with such authority and such contempt—that I looked at her in astonishment. Some suspicion seemed to be roused in her by finding me and Miss Minerva together.

‘“No more gossip!” she called out sternly. “Do you hear me? Go to bed!”

‘Was it not enough to rouse anybody? I felt my pride burning in my face. “Am I a

child, or a servant?" I said. "I shall go to bed early or late as I please."

'She took one step forward; she seized me by the arm, and forced me to my feet. Think of it, Teresa! In all my life I have never had a hand laid on me except in kindness. Who knows it better than you! I tried vainly to speak—I saw Miss Minerva rise to interfere—I heard her say, "Mrs. Gallilee, you forget yourself!" Somehow, I got out of the room. On the landing, a dreadful fit of trembling shook me from head to foot. I sank down on the stairs. At first, I thought I was going to faint. No; I shook and shivered, but I kept my senses. I could hear their voices in the room.

'Mrs. Gallilee began. "Did you tell me just now that I had forgotten myself?"

'Miss Minerva answered, "Certainly, madam. You *did* forget yourself."

'The next words escaped me. After that,

they grew louder ; and I heard them again—my aunt first.

“ I am dissatisfied with your manner to me, Miss Minerva. It has latterly altered very much for the worse.”

“ In what respect, Mrs. Gallilee ? ”

“ In this respect. Your way of speaking to me implies an assertion of equality——”

“ Stop a minute, madam ! I am not so rich as you are. But I am at a loss to know in what other way I am not your equal. Did you assert your superiority—may I ask—when you came into my room without first knocking at the door ? ”

“ Miss Minerva ! Do you wish to remain in my service ? ”

“ Say employment, Mrs. Gallilee—if you please. I am quite indifferent in the matter. I am equally ready, at your entire convenience, to stay or to go.”

‘ Mrs. Gallilee’s voice sounded nearer, as if

she was approaching the door. "I think we arranged," she said, "that there was to be a month's notice on either side, when I first engaged you?"

"Yes—at my suggestion."

"Take your month's notice, if you please."

"Dating from to-morrow?"

"Of course!"

"My aunt came out, and found me on the stairs. I tried to rise. It was not to be done. My head turned giddy. She must have seen that I was quite prostrate—and yet she took no notice of the state I was in. Cruel, cruel creature! she accused me of listening.

"Can't you see that the poor girl is ill?"

"It was Miss Minerva's voice. I looked round at her, feeling fainter and fainter. She stooped; I felt her strong sinewy arms round me; she lifted me gently. "I'll take care of you," she whispered—and carried me down-

stairs to my room, as easily as if I had been a child.

‘I must rest, Teresa. The remembrance of that dreadful night brings it all back again. Don’t be anxious about me, my old dear ! You shall hear more to-morrow.’

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON the next day events happened, the influence of which upon Carmina's excitable nature urged her to complete her unfinished letter, without taking the rest that she needed. Once more—and, as the result proved, for the last time—she wrote to her faithful old friend in these words :

‘Don’t ask me to tell you how the night passed ! Miss Minerva was the first person who came to me in the morning.

‘She had barely said a few kind words, when Maria interrupted us, reminding her governess of the morning’s lessons. “Mrs. Gallilee has sent her,” Miss Minerva whispered ; “I will return to you in the hour before the children’s dinner.”

‘The next person who appeared was, as we had both anticipated, Mrs. Gallilee herself.

‘She brought me a cup of tea; and the first words she spoke were words of apology for her conduct on the previous night. Her excuse was that she had been “harassed by anxieties which completely upset her.” And—can you believe it?—she implored me not to mention “the little misunderstanding between us when I next wrote to her son!” Is this woman made of iron and stone, instead of flesh and blood? Does she really think me such a wretch as to cause Ovid, under any provocation, a moment’s anxiety while he is away? The fewest words that would satisfy her, and so send her out of my room, were the only words I said.

‘After this, an agreeable surprise was in store for me. The familiar voice of good Mr. Gallilee applied for admission—through the keyhole!

“ “Are you asleep, my dear? May I come in?” His kind, fat old face peeped round the door when I said Yes—and reminded me of Zo, at dinner, when she asks for more pudding, and doesn’t think she will get it. Mr. Gallilee had something to ask for, and some doubt of getting it, which accounted for the resemblance. “I’ve taken the liberty, Carmina, of sending for our doctor. You’re a delicate plant, my dear——” (Here, his face disappeared, and he spoke to somebody outside)—“You think so yourself, don’t you, Mr. Null? And you have a family of daughters, haven’t you?” (His face appeared again; more like Zo than ever.) “Do please see him, my child; I’m not easy about you. I was on the stairs last night—nobody ever notices me, do they, Mr. Null?—and I saw Miss Minerva—good creature, and, Lord, how strong!—carrying you to your bed. Mr. Null’s waiting outside. Don’t distress me by saying No!”

‘Is there anybody cruel enough to distress Mr. Gallilee? The doctor came in—looking like a clergyman; dressed all in black, with a beautiful frill to his shirt, and a spotless white cravat. He stared hard at me; he produced a little glass-tube; he gave it a shake, and put it under my arm; he took it away again, and consulted it; he said, “Aha!” he approved of my tongue; he disliked my pulse; he gave his opinion at last. “Perfect quiet. I must see Mrs. Gallilee.” And there was an end of it.

‘Mr. Gallilee observed the medical proceedings with awe. “Mr. Null is a wonderful man,” he whispered, before he followed the doctor out. Ill and wretched as I was, this little interruption amused me. I wonder why I write about it here? There are serious things waiting to be told—am I weakly putting them off?

‘Miss Minerva came back to me as she had

promised. "It is well," she said gravely, "that the doctor has been to see you."

'I asked if the doctor thought me very ill.

' "He thinks you have narrowly escaped a nervous fever; and he has given some positive orders. One of them is that your slightest wishes are to be humoured. If he had not said that, Mrs. Gallilee would have prevented me from seeing you. She has been obliged to give way; and she hates me—almost as bitterly, Carmina, as she hates you."

'This called to my mind the interruption of the previous night, when Miss Minerva had something important to tell me. When I asked what it was, she shook her head, and said painful subjects of conversation were not fit subjects in my present state.

'Need I add that I insisted on hearing what she had to say? Oh, how completely my poor father must have been deceived, when he made his horrible sister my guardian! If I

had not fortunately offended the music-master, she would have used Mr. Le Frank as a means of making Ovid jealous, and of sowing the seeds of dissension between us. Having failed so far, she is (as Miss Minerva thinks) at a loss to discover any other means of gaining her wicked ends. Her rage at finding herself baffled seems to account for her furious conduct, when she discovered me in Miss Minerva's room.

‘ You will ask, as I did, what has she to gain by this wicked plotting and contriving, with its shocking accompaniments of malice and anger ?

‘ Miss Minerva answered, “ I still believe that money is the motive. Her son is mistaken about her ; her friends are mistaken ; they think she is fond of money—the truer conclusion is, she is short of money. There is the secret of the hard bargains she drives, and the mercenary opinions she holds. I don't doubt that her income would be enough for most other

women in her position. It is not enough for a woman who is jealous of her rich sister's place in the world. Wait a little, and you will see that I am not talking at random. You were present at the grand party she gave some weeks since?"

"I wish I had stayed in my own room," I said. "Mrs. Gallilee was offended with me for not admiring her scientific friends. With one or two exceptions, they talked of nothing but themselves and their discoveries—and, oh, dear, how ugly they were!"

"Never mind that now, Carmina. Did you notice the profusion of splendid flowers, in the hall and on the staircase, as well as in the reception-rooms?"

"Yes."

"Did you observe—no, you are a young girl—did you hear any of the gentlemen, in the supper-room, expressing their admiration of the luxuries provided for the guests, the ex-

quisite French cookery and the delicious wine? Why was all the money which these things cost spent in one evening? Because Lady Northlake's parties must be matched by Mrs. Gallilee's parties. Lady Northlake lives in a fashionable neighbourhood in London, and has splendid carriages and horses. This is a fashionable neighbourhood. Judge what this house costs, and the carriages and horses, when I tell you that the rent of the stables alone is over a hundred pounds a year. Lady Northlake has a superb place in Scotland. Mrs. Gallilee is not able to rival her sister in that respect—but she has her marine villa in the Isle of Wight. When Mr. Gallilee said you should have some sailing this autumn, did you think he meant that he would hire a boat? He referred to the yacht, which is part of the establishment at the sea-side. Lady Northlake goes yachting with her husband; and Mrs. Gallilee goes yachting with her husband. Do you know

what it costs, when the first milliner in Paris supplies English ladies with dresses? That milliner's lowest charge for a dress which Mrs. Gallilee would despise—ordinary material, my dear, and imitation lace—is forty pounds. Think a little—and even your inexperience will see that the mistress of this house is spending more than she can afford, and is likely (unless she has resources that we know nothing about) to be, sooner or later, in serious need of money.”

‘ This was a new revelation to me, and it altered my opinion of course. But I still failed to see what Mrs. Gallilee’s extravagances had to do with her wicked resolution to prevent Ovid from marrying me. Miss Minerva’s only answer to this was to tell me to write to Mr. Mool, while I had the chance, and ask for a copy of my father’s Will. “ I will take the letter to him,” she said, “ and bring the reply myself. It will save time, if it does nothing

else." "The letter was written in a minute. Just as she took it from me, the parlour-maid announced that the early dinner was ready.

"Two hours later, the reply was in my hands. The old father had taken Maria and Zo for their walk ; and Miss Minerva had left the house by herself—sending word to Mrs. Gallilee that she was obliged to go out on business of her own.

" "Did Mrs. Gallilee see you come in?" I asked.

" "Yes. She was watching for me, no doubt."

" "Did she see you go upstairs to my room?"

" "Yes."

" "And said nothing?"

" "Nothing."

"We looked at each other ; both of us feeling the same doubt of how the day would

end. Miss Minerva pointed impatiently to the lawyer's reply. I opened it.

‘Mr. Mool’s letter was very kind, but quite incomprehensible in the latter part of it. After referring me to his private residence, in case I wished to consult him personally later in the day, he mentioned some proceeding, called “proving the Will,” and some strange place called “Doctors’ Commons.” However, there was the copy of the Will, and that was all we wanted.

‘I began reading it. How I pitied the unfortunate men who have to learn the law! My dear Teresa, I might as well have tried to read an unknown tongue. The strange words, the perpetual repetitions, the absence of stops, utterly bewildered me. I handed the copy to Miss Minerva. Instead of beginning on the first page, as I had done, she turned to the last. With what breathless interest I watched her ace! First, I saw that she understood what

she was reading. Then, after a while, she turned pale. And then, she lifted her eyes to me. "Don't be frightened," she said.

'But I *was* frightened. My ignorant imagination pictured some dreadful unknown power given to Mrs. Gallilee by the Will. "What can my aunt do to me?" I asked.

'Miss Minerva composed me—without concealing the truth. "In her position, Carmina, and with her intensely cold and selfish nature, there is no fear of her attempting to reach her ends by violent means. Your happiness may be in danger—and that prospect, God knows, is bad enough."

'When she talked of *my* happiness, I naturally thought of Ovid. I asked if there was anything about him in the Will.

'It was no doubt a stupid thing to say at such a time; and it seemed to annoy her. "*You* are the only person concerned," she answered sharply. "It is Mrs. Gallilee's

interest that you shall never be her son's wife, or any man's wife. If she can have her way, you will live and die an unmarried woman."

'This did me good: it made me angry. I began to feel like myself again. I said, "Please let me hear the rest of it."

'Miss Minerva first patiently explained to me what she had read in the Will. She then returned to the subject of my aunt's extravagance; speaking from experience of what had happened in her own family. "If Mrs. Gallilee borrows money," she said, "her husband will, in all probability, have to repay the loan. And, if borrowings go on in that way, Maria and Zoe will be left wretchedly provided for, in comparison with Lady Northlake's daughters. A fine large fortune would wonderfully improve these doubtful prospects—can you guess, Carmina, where it is to come from?" I could easily guess, now I understood the Will. My good Teresa, if I

die without leaving children, the fine large fortune comes from Me.

‘You see it all now—don’t you? After I had thanked Miss Minerva, I turned away my head on the pillow overpowered by disgust.

‘The clock in the hall struck the hour of the children’s tea. Miss Minerva would be wanted immediately. At parting, she kissed me. “There is the kiss that you meant to give me last night,” she said. “Don’t despair of yourself. I am to be in the house for a month longer; and I am a match for Mrs. Gallilee. We will say no more now. Compose yourself, and try to sleep.”

‘She went away to her duties. Sleep was out of the question. My attention wandered when I tried to read. Doing nothing meant, in other words, thinking of what had happened. If you had come into my room, I should have told you all about it. The next best thing was

to talk to you in this way. You don't know what a relief it has been to me to write these lines.'

'The night has come, and Mrs. Gallilee's cruelty has at last proved too much even for my endurance.

'Try not to be surprised; try not to be alarmed. If my mind to-morrow is the same as my mind to-night, I shall attempt to make my escape. I shall take refuge with Lady Northlake.

'Oh, if I could go to Ovid! But he is travelling in the deserts of Canada. Until his return to the coast, I can only write to him to the care of his bankers at Quebec. I should not know where to find him, when I arrived; and what a dreadful meeting—if I did find him—to be obliged to acknowledge that it is his mother who has driven me away! There will be nothing to alarm him, if I go to his mother's sister. If you could see Lady

Northlake, you would feel as sure as I do that she will take my part.

‘After writing to you, I must have fallen asleep. It was quite dark, when I was awakened by the striking of a match in my room. I looked round, expecting to see Miss Minerva. The person lighting my candle was Mrs. Gallilee.

‘She poured out the composing medicine which Mr. Null had ordered for me. I took it in silence. She sat down by the bedside.

‘“My child,” she began, “we are friends again now. You bear no malice, I am sure.”

‘Distrust still kept me silent. I remembered that she had watched for Miss Minerva’s return, and that she had seen Miss Minerva go up to my room. The idea that she meant to be revenged on us both for having our secrets, and keeping them from her knowledge, took complete possession of my mind.

‘“Are you feeling better?” she asked.

“ “ Yes.”

“ “ Is there anything I can get for you? ”

“ “ Not now—thank you.”

“ “ Would you like to see Mr. Null again, before to-morrow? ”

“ “ Oh, no ! ”

‘ These were ungraciously short replies—but it cost me an effort to speak to her at all. She showed no signs of taking offence ; she proceeded as smoothly as ever.

“ “ My dear Carmina, I have my faults of temper ; and, with such pursuits as mine, I am not perhaps a sympathetic companion for a young girl. But I hope you believe that it is my duty and my pleasure to be a second mother to you? ”

‘ Yes ; she did really say that ! Whether I was only angry, or whether I was getting hysterical, I don’t know. I began to feel an oppression in my breathing that almost choked me. There are two windows in my room, and

one of them only was open. I was obliged to ask her to open the other.

‘She did it; she came back, and fanned me. I submitted as long as I could—and then I begged her not to trouble herself any longer. She put down the fan, and went on with what she had to say.

‘“I wish to speak to you about Miss Minerva. You are aware that I gave her notice, last night, to leave her situation. For your sake, I regret that I did not take this step before you came to England.”

‘My confidence in myself returned when I heard Miss Minerva spoken of in this way. I said at once that I considered her to be one of my best and truest friends.

‘“My dear child, that is exactly what I lament! This person has insinuated herself into your confidence—and she is utterly unworthy of it.”

‘Could I let those abominable words pass

in silence? “Mrs. Gallilee!” I said, “you are cruelly wronging a woman whom I love and respect!”

“Mrs. Gallilee?” she repeated. “Do I owe it to Miss Minerva that you have left off calling me Aunt? Your obstinacy, Carmina, leaves me no alternative but to speak out. If I had done my duty, I ought to have said long since, what I am going to say now. You are putting your trust in the bitterest enemy you have; an enemy who secretly hates you with the unforgiving hatred of a rival!”

‘Look back at my letter, describing what passed between Miss Minerva and me, when I went to her room; and you will know what I felt on hearing her spoken of as “a rival.” My sense of justice refused to believe it. But, oh, my dear old nurse, there was some deeper sense in me that said, as if in words, It is true!’

‘Mrs. Gallilee went on, without mercy.

“I know her thoroughly; I have looked

into her false heart. Nobody has discovered her but me. Charge her with it, if you like ; and let her deny it if she dare. Miss Minerva is secretly in love with my son."

' She got up. Her object was gained : she was even with me, and with the woman who had befriended me, at last.

" "Lie down in your bed again," she said, "and think over what I have told you. In your own interests, think over it well."

' I was left alone.

' Shall I tell you what saved me from sinking under the shock ? Ovid—thousands and thousands of miles away—Ovid saved me.

' I love him with all my heart and soul ; and I do firmly believe that I know him better than I know myself. If his mother had betrayed Miss Minerva to him, as she has betrayed her to me, that unhappy woman would have had his truest pity. I am as certain of this, as I am that I see the moon,

while I write, shining on my bed. Ovid would have pitied her. And I pitied her.

‘I wrote the lines that follow, and sent them to her by the maid. In the fear that she might mistake my motives, and think me angry and jealous, I addressed her with my former familiarity by her christian name :—

“Last night, Frances, I ventured to ask if you loved some one who did not love you. And you answered by saying to me, Guess who he is. My aunt has just told me that he is her son. Has she spoken the truth ?”

‘I am now waiting to receive Miss Minerva’s reply.

‘For the first time since I have been in the house, my door is locked. I cannot, and will not, see Mrs. Gallilee again. All her former cruelties are, as I feel it, nothing to the cruelty of her coming here when I am ill, and saying to me what she has said.

‘The weary time passes, and still there is

no reply. Is Frances angry? or is she hesitating how to answer me—personally or by writing? No! she has too much delicacy of feeling to answer in her own person.

‘I have only done her justice. The maid has just asked me to open the door. I have got my answer. Read it.

‘ “Mrs. Gallilee has spoken the truth.

‘ “How I can have betrayed myself so that she has discovered my miserable secret, is more than I can tell. I will not own it to her, or to any living creature but yourself. Undeserving as I am, I know that I can trust you.

‘ “It is needless to dwell at any length on this confession. Many things in my conduct, which must have perplexed you, will explain themselves now. There has been, however, one concealment on my part, which it is due to you that I should acknowledge.

‘ “If Mrs. Gallilee had taken me into her

confidence, I confess that my jealousy would have degraded me into becoming her accomplice. As things were, I was too angry and too cunning to let her make use of me without trusting me.

“There are other acts of deceit which I ought to acknowledge—if I could summon composure enough to write about them. Better to say at once—I am not worthy of your pardon, not worthy even of your pity.

“With the same sincerity, I warn you that the wickedness in me, on which Mrs. Gallilee calculated, may be in me still. The influence of your higher and better nature—helped perhaps by that other influence of which the old priest spoke in his letter—has opened my heart to tenderness and penitence of which I never believed myself capable: has brought the burning tears into my eyes which make it a hard task to write to you. All this I know, and yet I dare not believe in myself.

It is useless to deny it, Carmina—I love him. Even now, when you have found me out, I love him. Don't trust me. Oh, God, what torture it is to write it—but I *do* write it, I *will* write it—don't trust me!

“ One thing I may say for myself. I know the utter hopelessness of that love which I have acknowledged. I know that he returns your love, and will never return mine. So let it be.

“ I am not young; I have no right to comfort myself with hopes that I know to be vain. If one of us is to suffer, let it be that one who is used to suffering. I have never been the darling of my parents, like you; I have not been used at home to the kindness and the love that *you* remember. A life without sweetness and joy has well fitted me for a loveless future. And, besides, you are worthy of him, and I am not. Mrs. Gallilee is wrong, Carmina, if she thinks I am your rival. I am not your rival; I never can be your rival.

Believe nothing else, but, for God's sake, believe that!

“I have no more to say—at least no more that I can remember now. Perhaps, you shrink from remaining in the same house with me? Let me know it, and I shall be ready—I might almost say, glad—to go.”

‘Have you read her letter, Teresa? Am I wrong in feeling that this poor wounded heart has surely some claim on me? If I *am* wrong, oh, what am I to do? what am I to do?’

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE last lines addressed by Carmina to her old nurse were completed on the seventeenth of August, and were posted that night.

The day that followed was memorable to Carmina, and memorable to Mrs. Gallilee. Doctor Benjulia had his reasons also for remembering the eighteenth of August.

Still in search of a means to undermine the confidence which united Ovid and Carmina, and still calling on her invention in vain, Mrs. Gallilee had passed a sleepless night. Her maid, entering the room at the usual hour, was ordered to leave her in bed, and not to return until the bell rang. On ordinary occasions, Mrs. Gallilee was up in time to receive the

letters arriving by the first delivery; the correspondence of the other members of the household being sorted by her own hands, before it was distributed by the servant. On this particular morning (after sleeping a little through sheer exhaustion), she entered the empty breakfast-room two hours later than usual. The letters waiting for her were addressed only to herself. She rang for the maid.

‘Any other letters this morning?’ she asked.

‘Two, for my master.’

‘No more than that!’

‘Nothing more, ma’am—except a telegram for Miss Carmina.’

‘When did it come?’

‘Soon after the letters.’

‘Have you given it to her?’

‘Being a telegram, ma’am, I thought I ought to take it to Miss Carmina at once.’

‘Quite right. You can go.’

A telegram for Carmina? Was there some private correspondence going on? And were the interests involved too important to wait for the ordinary means of communication by post? Considering these questions, Mrs. Gallilee poured out a cup of tea and looked over her letters.

Only one of them especially attracted her notice in her present frame of mind. The writer was Benjulia. He dispensed as usual with the customary forms of address.

‘I have had a letter about Ovid, from a friend of mine in Canada. There is an allusion to him of the complimentary sort, which I don’t altogether understand. I want to ask you about it—but I can’t spare the time to go a-visiting. So much the better for me—I hate conversation, and I like work. You have got your carriage—and your fine friends are out of town. If you want a drive, come to me,

and bring your last letters from Ovid with you.'

Mrs. Gallilee decided on considering this characteristic proposal later in the day. Her first and foremost interest took her upstairs to her niece's room.

Carmina had left her bed. Robed in her white dressing-gown, she lay on the sofa in the sitting-room. When her aunt came in, she started and shuddered. Those signs of nervous aversion escaped the notice of Mrs. Gallilee. Her attention had been at once attracted by a travelling bag, opened as if in preparation for packing. The telegram lay on Carmina's lap. The significant connection between those two objects asserted itself plainly. But it was exactly the opposite of the connection suspected by Mrs. Gallilee. The telegram had prevented Carmina from leaving the house.

Mrs. Gallilee paved the way for the necessary investigation, by making a few common-

place inquiries. How had Carmina passed the night? Had the maid taken care of her at breakfast-time? Was there anything that her aunt could do for her? Carmina replied with a reluctance which she was unable to conceal. Mrs. Gallilee passed over the cold reception accorded to her without remark, and pointed with a bland smile to the telegram.

‘No bad news, I hope?’

Carmina handed the telegram silently to her aunt. The change of circumstances which the arrival of the message had produced, made concealment superfluous. Mrs. Gallilee opened the telegram, keeping her suspicions in reserve. It had been sent from Rome by the old foreign woman, named ‘Teresa,’ and it contained these words:

‘My husband died this morning. Expect me in London from day to day.’

‘Why is this person coming to London?’ Mrs. Gallilee inquired.

Stung by the insolent composure of that question, Carmina answered sharply, 'Her name is on the telegram ; you ought to know !'

'Indeed ?' said Mrs. Gallilee. 'Perhaps, she likes London ?'

'She hates London ! You have had her in the house ; you have seen us together. Now she has lost her husband, do you think she can live apart from the one person in the world whom she loves best ?'

'My dear, these matters of mere sentiment escape my notice,' Mrs. Gallilee rejoined. 'It's an expensive journey from Italy to England. What was her husband ?'

'Her husband was foreman in a manufactory till his health failed him.'

'And then,' Mrs. Gallilee concluded, 'the money failed him, of course. What did he manufacture ?'

'Artists' colours.'

‘ Oh ! an artists’ colourman ? Not a very lucrative business, I should think. Has his widow any resources of her own ? ’

‘ My purse is hers ! ’

‘ Very generous, I am sure ! Even the humblest lodgings are dear in this neighbourhood. However—with your assistance—your old servant may be able to live somewhere near you.’

Having settled the question of Teresa’s life in London in this way, Mrs. Gallilee returned to the prime object of her suspicion—she took possession of the travelling bag.

Carmina looked at her with the submission of utter bewilderment. Teresa had been the companion of her life ; Teresa had been received as her attendant, when she was first established under her aunt’s roof. She had assumed that her nurse would become a member of the household again, as a matter of course. With Teresa to encourage her, she

had summoned the resolution to live with Ovid's mother, until Ovid came back. And now she had been informed, in words too plain to be mistaken, that Teresa must find a home for herself when she returned to London! Surprise, disappointment, indignation held Carmina speechless.

‘This thing,’ Mrs. Gallilee proceeded, holding up the bag, ‘will be only in your way here. I will have it put with our own bags and boxes, in the lumber-room. And, by-the-bye, I fancy you don't quite understand (naturally enough, at your age) our relative positions in this house. My child, the authority of your late father is the authority which your guardian holds over you. I hope never to be obliged to exercise it—especially, if you will be good enough to remember two things. I expect you to consult me in your choice of companions; and to wait for my approval before you make arrangements which—well!

let us say, which require the bag to be removed from the lumber-room.'

Without waiting for a reply, she turned to the door. After opening it, she paused—and looked back into the room.

'Have you thought of what I told you, last night?' she asked.

Sorely as they had been tried, Carmina's energies rallied at this. 'I have done my best to forget it!' she answered.

'At Miss Minerva's request?'

Carmina took no notice of the question.

Mrs. Gallilee persisted. 'Have you had any communication with that person?'

There was still no reply. Preserving her temper, Mrs. Gallilee stepped out on the landing, and called to Miss Minerva. The governess answered from the upper floor.

'Please come down here,' said Mrs. Gallilee.

Miss Minerva obeyed. Her face was paler than usual; her eyes had lost something of

their piercing brightness. She stopped outside Carmina's door. Mrs. Gallilee requested her to enter the room.

After an instant—only an instant—of hesitation, Miss Minerva crossed the threshold. She cast one quick glance at Carmina, and lowered her eyes before the look could be returned. Mrs. Gallilee discovered no mute signs of an understanding between them. She turned to the governess.

‘Have you been here already this morning?’ she inquired.

‘No.’

‘Is there some coolness between you and my niece?’

‘None, madam, that I know of.’

‘Then, why don't you speak to her when you come into the room?’

‘Miss Carmina has been ill. I see her resting on the sofa—and I am unwilling to disturb her.’

‘Not even by saying good-morning?’

‘Not even that!’

‘You are exceedingly careful, Miss Minerva.’

‘I have had some experience of sick people, and I have learnt to be careful. May I ask if you have any particular reason for calling me downstairs?’

Mrs. Gallilee prepared to put her niece and her governess to the final test.

‘I wish you to suspend the children’s lessons for an hour or two,’ she answered.

‘Certainly. Shall I tell them?’

‘No; I will tell them myself.’

‘What do you wish me to do?’ said Miss Minerva.

‘I wish you to remain here with my niece.’

If Mrs. Gallilee, after answering in those terms, had looked at her niece, instead of looking at her governess, she would have seen Carmina—distrustful of her own self-control—

move on the sofa so as to turn her face to the wall. As it was, Miss Minerva's attitude and look silently claimed some explanation.

Mrs. Gallilee addressed her in a whisper. 'Let me say a word to you at the door.'

Miss Minerva followed her to the landing outside. Carmina turned again, listening anxiously.

'I am not at all satisfied with her looks, this morning,' Mrs. Gallilee proceeded; 'and I don't think it right she should be left alone. My household duties must be attended to. Will you take my place at the sofa, until Mr. Null comes?' ('*Now*,' she thought, 'if there is jealousy between them, I shall see it!')

She saw nothing: the governess quietly bowed to her, and went back to Carmina. She heard nothing: although the half-closed door gave her opportunities for listening. Ignorant, she had entered the room. Ignorant, she left it.

Carmina lay still and silent. With noiseless step, Miss Minerva approached the sofa, and stood by it, waiting. Neither of them lifted her eyes, the one to the other. The woman suffered her torture in secret. The girl's sweet eyes filled slowly with tears. One by one the minutes of the morning passed—not many in number, before there was a change. In silence, Carmina held out her hand. In silence, Miss Minerva took it and kissed it.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MRS. GALLILEE saw her housekeeper as usual, and gave her orders for the day. ‘If there is anything forgotten,’ she said, ‘I must leave it to you. For the next hour or two, don’t let me be disturbed.’

Some of her letters of the morning were still unread, others required immediate acknowledgment. She was not as ready for her duties as usual. For once, the most unendurably industrious of women was idle, and sat thinking.

Even her unimaginative nature began to tremble on the verge of superstition. Twice, had the subtle force of circumstances defeated her, in the attempt to meddle with the contemplated marriage of her son. By means of the

music-master, she had planned to give Ovid jealous reasons for doubting Carmina—and she had failed. By means of the governess, she had planned to give Carmina jealous reasons for doubting Ovid—and she had failed. When some people talked of Fatality, were they quite such fools as she had hitherto supposed them to be? It would be a waste of time to inquire. What next step could she take?

Urged by the intolerable sense of defeat to find reasons for still looking hopefully to the future, the learned Mrs. Gallilee lowered herself to the intellectual level of the most ignorant servant in the house. The modern Muse of Science unconsciously opened her mind to the vulgar belief in luck. She said to herself, as her kitchen-maid might have said, *We will see what comes of it, the third time!*

Benjulia's letter was among the other letters waiting on the table. She took it up, and read it again.

In her present frame of mind, to find her thoughts occupied by the doctor, was to be reminded of Ovid's strange allusion to his professional colleague, on the day of his departure. Speaking of Carmina, he had referred to one person whom he did not wish her to see in his absence; and that person, he had himself admitted to be Benjulia. He had been asked to state his objection to the doctor—and how had he replied? He had said, 'I don't think Benjulia a fit person to be in the company of a young girl.'

Why?

There are many men of mature age, who are not fit persons to be in the company of young girls—but they are either men who despise, or men who admire, young girls. Benjulia belonged neither to the one nor to the other of these two classes. Girls were objects of absolute indifference to him—with the one exception of Zo, aged ten. Never yet, after

meeting him in society hundreds of times, had Mrs. Gallilee seen him talk to young ladies or even notice young ladies. Ovid's alleged reason for objecting to Benjulia stood palpably revealed as a clumsy excuse.

In the present posture of events, to arrive at that conclusion was enough for Mrs. Gallilee. Without stopping to pursue the idea, she rang the bell, and ordered her carriage to be ready that afternoon, at three o'clock.

Doubtful, and more than doubtful, though it might be, the bare prospect of finding herself possessed, before the day was out, of a means of action capable of being used against Carmina, raised Mrs. Gallilee's spirits. She was ready at last to attend to her correspondence.

One of the letters was from her sister in Scotland. Among other subjects, it referred to Carmina.

‘Why won’t you let that sweet girl come and stay with us?’ Lady Northlake asked. ‘My daughters are longing for such a companion; and both my sons are ready to envy Ovid the moment they see her. Tell my nephew, when you next write, that I thoroughly understand his falling in love with that gentle pretty creature at first sight.’

Carmina’s illness was the ready excuse which presented itself in Mrs. Gallilee’s reply. With or without an excuse, Lady Northlake was to be resolutely prevented from taking a foremost place in her niece’s heart, and encouraging the idea of her niece’s marriage. Mrs. Gallilee felt almost pious enough to thank Heaven that her sister’s palace in the Highlands was at one end of Great Britain, and her own marine villa at the other!

The marine villa reminded her of the family migration to the sea-side.

When would it be desirable to leave

London? Not until her mind was relieved of the heavier anxieties that now weighed on it. Not while events might happen—in connection with the threatening creditors or the contemplated marriage—which would baffle her latest calculations, and make her presence in London a matter of serious importance to her own interests. Miss Minerva, again, was a new obstacle in the way. To take her to the Isle of Wight was not to be thought of for a moment. To dismiss her at once, by paying the month's salary, might be the preferable course to pursue—but for two objections. In the first place (if the friendly understanding between them really continued) Carmina might communicate with the discarded governess in secret. In the second place, to pay Miss Minerva's salary before she had earned it, was a concession from which Mrs. Gallilee's spite, and Mrs. Gallilee's principles of paltry economy, recoiled in disgust. No! the waiting policy in

London, under whatever aspect it might be viewed, was, for the present, the one policy to pursue.

She returned to the demands of her correspondence. Just as she had taken up her pen, the sanctuary of the boudoir was violated by the appearance of a servant.

‘What is it now? Didn’t the housekeeper tell you that I am not to be disturbed?’

‘I beg your pardon, ma’am. My master——’

‘What does your master want?’

‘He wishes to see you, ma’am.’

This was a circumstance entirely without parallel in the domestic history of the house. In sheer astonishment, Mrs. Gallilee pushed away her letters, and said ‘Show him in.’

When the boys of fifty years since were naughty, the schoolmaster of the period was not accustomed to punish them by appealing

to their sense of honour. If a boy wanted a flogging, in those days, the educational system seized a cane, or a birch-rod, and gave it to him. Mr. Gallilee entered his wife's room, with the feelings which had once animated him, on entering the schoolmaster's study to be caned. When he said 'Good-morning, my dear!' his face presented the expression of fifty years since, when he had said, 'Please, sir, let me off this time!'

'Now,' said Mrs. Gallilee, 'what do you want?'

'Only a little word. How well you're looking, my dear!'

After a sleepless night, followed by her defeat in Carmina's room, Mrs. Gallilee looked, and knew that she looked, ugly and old. And her wretched husband had reminded her of it. 'Go on!' she answered sternly.

Mr. Gallilee moistened his dry lips. 'I think I'll take a chair, if you will allow me,'

he said. Having taken his chair (at a respectful distance from his wife), he looked all round the room with the air of a visitor who had never seen it before. ‘How very pretty!’ he remarked softly. ‘Such taste in colour. I think the carpet was your own design, wasn’t it? How chaste!’

‘*Will* you come to the point, Mr. Gallilee?’

‘With pleasure, my dear—with pleasure. I’m afraid I smell of tobacco?’

‘I don’t care if you do!’

This was such an agreeable surprise to Mr. Gallilee, that he got on his legs again to enjoy it standing up. ‘How kind! Really now, how kind!’ He approached Mrs. Gallilee confidentially. ‘And do you know, my dear, it was one of the most remarkable cigars I ever smoked.’ Mrs. Gallilee laid down her pen, and eyed him with an annihilating frown. In the extremity of his confusion Mr. Gallilee

ventured nearer. He felt the sinister fascination of the serpent in the expression of those awful eyebrows. ‘How well you are looking! How amazingly well you are looking this morning!’ He leered at his learned wife, and patted her shoulder!

For the moment, Mrs. Gallilee was petrified. At his time of life, was this fat and feeble creature approaching her with conjugal endearments? At that early hour of the day, had his guilty lips tasted his favourite champagne, foaming in his well-beloved silver mug, over his much-admired lump of ice? And was *this* the result?

‘Mr. Gallilee!’

‘Yes, my dear?’

‘Sit down!’

Mr. Gallilee sat down.

‘Have you been to the club?’

Mr. Gallilee got up again.

‘Sit down!’

Mr. Gallilee sat down. 'I was about to say, my dear, that I'll show you over the club with the greatest pleasure—if that's what you mean.'

'If you are not a downright idiot,' said Mrs. Gallilee, 'understand this! Either say what you have to say, or——' she lifted her hand, and let it down on the writing-table with a slap that made the pens ring in the inkstand —' or, leave the room!'

Mr. Gallilee lifted *his* hand, and searched in the breast-pocket of his coat. He pulled out his cigar-case, and put it back in a hurry. He tried again, and produced a letter. He looked piteously round the room, in sore need of somebody whom he might appeal to, and ended in appealing to himself. 'What sort of temper will she be in?' he whispered.

'What have you got there?' Mrs. Gallilee asked sharply. 'One of the letters you had this morning?'

Mr. Gallilee looked at her with admiration. ‘Wonderful woman!’ he said. ‘Nothing escapes her! Allow me, my dear.’

He rose and presented the letter, as if he was presenting a petition. Mrs. Gallilee snatched it out of his hand. Mr. Gallilee went softly back to his chair, and breathed a devout ejaculation. ‘Oh, Lord!’

It was a letter from one of the tradespeople, whom Mrs. Gallilee had attempted to pacify with a payment ‘on account.’ The tradesman felt compelled, in justice to himself, to appeal to Mr. Gallilee, as master of the house (!). It was impossible for him (he submitted with the greatest respect) to accept a payment, which did not amount to one-third of the sum owing to him for more than a twelvemonth. ‘Wretch!’ cried Mrs. Gallilee. ‘I’ll settle his bill, and never employ him again!’ She opened her cheque-book, and dipped her pen in the ink. A faint voice meekly protested.

Mr. Gallilee was on his legs again. Mr. Gallilee said, 'Please don't!'

His incredible rashness silenced his wife. There he stood ; his round eyes staring at the cheque-book, his fat cheeks quivering with excitement. 'You mustn't do it,' he said, with a first and last outburst of courage. 'Give me a minute, my dear—oh, good gracious, give me a minute!'

He searched in his pocket again, and produced another letter. His eyes wandered towards the door ; drops of perspiration oozed out on his forehead. He laid the second letter on the table ; he looked at his wife, and—ran out of the room.

Mrs. Gallilee opened the second letter. Another dissatisfied tradesman? No : creditors far more formidable than the grocer and the butcher. An official letter from the bankers, informing Mr. Gallilee that 'the account was overdrawn.'

She seized her pass-book, and her paper of calculations. Never yet had her rigid arithmetic committed an error. Column by column she revised her figures—and made the humiliating discovery of her first mistake. She had drawn out all, and more than all, the money deposited in the bank; and the next half-yearly payment of income was not due until Christmas.

There was but one thing to be done—to go at once to the bank. If Ovid had not been in the wilds of Canada, Mrs. Gallilee would have made her confession to him without hesitation. As it was, the servant called a cab, and she made her confession to the bankers.

The matter was soon settled to her satisfaction. It rested (exactly as Miss Minerva had anticipated) with Mr. Gallilee. In the house, he might abdicate his authority to his heart's content. Out of the house, in matters of business, he was master still. His 'investments'

represented excellent 'security ;' he had only to say how much he wanted to borrow, and to sign certain papers—and the thing was done.

Mrs. Gallilee went home again, with her pecuniary anxieties at rest for the time. The carriage was waiting for her at the door.

Should she fulfil her intention of visiting Benjulia? She was not a person who readily changed her mind—and, besides, after the troubles of the morning, the drive into the country would be a welcome relief. Hearing that Mr. Gallilee was still at home, she looked in at the smoking-room. Unerring instinct told her where to find her husband, under present circumstances. There he was, enjoying his cigar in comfort, with his coat off and his feet on a chair. She opened the door. 'I want you, this evening,' she said—and shut the door again ; leaving Mr. Gallilee suffocated by a mouthful of his own smoke.

Before getting into the carriage, she only

waited to restore her face with a flush of health (from Paris), modified by a sprinkling of pallor (from London). Benjulia's humour was essentially an uncertain humour. It might be necessary to fascinate the doctor.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE complimentary allusion to Ovid, which Benjulia had not been able to understand, was contained in a letter from Mr. Morphew, and was expressed in these words:—

‘ Let me sincerely thank you for making us acquainted with Mr. Ovid Vere. Now that he has left us, we really feel as if we had said good-bye to an old friend. I don’t know when I have met with such a perfectly unselfish man—and I say this, speaking from experience of him. In my unavoidable absence, he volunteered to attend a serious case of illness, accompanied by shocking circumstances—and this at a time when, as you know, his own broken health forbids him to undertake any

professional duty. While he could preserve the patient's life—and he did wonders, in this way—he was every day at the bedside, taxing his strength in the service of a perfect stranger. I fancy I see you (with your impatience of letter-writing at any length) looking to the end. Don't be alarmed. I am writing to your brother Lemuel by this mail, and I have little time to spare.'

Was this 'serious case of illness'—described as being 'accompanied by shocking circumstances'—a case of disease of the brain?

There was the question, proposed by Ben-julia's inveterate suspicion of Ovid! The bare doubt cost him the loss of a day's work. He reviled poor Mr. Morpew as 'a born idiot' for not having plainly stated what the patient's malady was, instead of wasting paper on smooth sentences, encumbered by long words. If Ovid had alluded to his Canadian patient in his letters to his mother, his customary preciseness

of language might be trusted to relieve Ben-julia's suspense. With that purpose in view, the doctor had written to Mrs. Gallilee.

Before he laid down his pen, he looked once more at Mr. Morpew's letter, and paused thoughtfully over one line: 'I am writing to your brother Lemuel by this mail.'

The information of which he was in search might be in *that* letter. If Mrs. Gallilee's correspondence with her son failed to enlighten him, here was another chance of making the desired discovery. Surely the wise course to take would be to write to Lemuel as well.

His one motive for hesitation was dislike of his younger brother—dislike so inveterate that he even recoiled from communicating with Lemuel through the post.

There had never been any sympathy between them; but indifference had only matured into downright enmity, on the doctor's part, a year since. Accident (the result of his own

absence of mind, while he was perplexed by an unsuccessful experiment) had placed Lemuel in possession of his hideous secret. The one person in the world who knew how he was really occupied in the laboratory, was his brother.

Here was the true motive of the bitterly contemptuous tone in which Benjulia had spoken to Ovid of his nearest relation. Lemuel's character was certainly deserving of severe judgment, in some of its aspects. In his hours of employment (as clerk in the office of a London publisher) he steadily and punctually performed the duties entrusted to him. In his hours of freedom, his sensual instincts got the better of him; and his jealous wife had her reasons for complaint. Among his friends, he was the subject of a wide diversity of opinion. Some of them agreed with his brother in thinking him little better than a fool. Others suspected him of possessing natural abilities, but

of being too lazy, perhaps too cunning, to exert them. In the office he allowed himself to be called ‘a mere machine’—and escaped the overwork which fell to the share of quicker men. When his wife and her relations declared him to be a mere animal, he never contradicted them—and so gained the reputation of a person on whom reprimand was thrown away. Under the protection of this unenviable character, he sometimes said severe things with an air of perfect simplicity. When the furious doctor discovered him in the laboratory, and said, ‘I’ll be the death of you, if you tell any living creature what I am doing!’—Lemuel answered, with a stare of stupid astonishment, ‘Make your mind easy; I should be ashamed to mention it.’

Further reflection decided Benjulia on writing. Even when he had a favour to ask, he was unable to address Lemuel with common politeness. ‘I hear that Morpew has written

to you by the last mail. I want to see the letter.' So much he wrote, and no more. What was barely enough for the purpose, was enough for the doctor, when he addressed his brother.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BETWEEN one and two o'clock, the next afternoon, Benjulia (at work in his laboratory) heard the bell which announced the arrival of a visitor at the house. No matter what the circumstances might be, the servants were forbidden to disturb him at his studies in any other way.

Very unwillingly he obeyed the call, locking the door behind him. At that hour it was luncheon-time in well-regulated households, and it was in the last degree unlikely that Mrs. Gallilee could be the visitor. Getting within view of the front of the house, he saw a man standing on the door-step. Advancing a little nearer, he recognised Lemuel.

‘Hullo!’ cried the elder brother.

‘Hullo!’ answered the younger, like an echo.

They stood looking at each other with the suspicious curiosity of two strange cats. Between Nathan Benjulia, the famous doctor, and Lemuel Benjulia, the publisher’s clerk, there was just family resemblance enough to suggest that they were relations. The younger brother was only a little over the ordinary height; he was rather fat than thin; he wore a moustache and whiskers; he dressed smartly—and his prevailing expression announced that he was thoroughly well satisfied with himself. But he inherited Benjulia’s gipsy complexion; and, in form and colour, he had Benjulia’s eyes.

‘How-d’ye-do, Nathan?’ he said.

‘What the devil brings you here?’ was the answer.

Lemuel passed over his brother’s rudeness

without notice. His mouth curled up at the corners with a mischievous smile.

‘I thought you wished to see my letter,’ he said.

‘Why couldn’t you send it by post?’

‘My wife wished me to take the opportunity of calling on you.’

‘That’s a lie,’ said Benjulia quietly. ‘Try another excuse. Or do a new thing. For once, speak the truth.’

Without waiting to hear the truth, he led the way into the room in which he had received Ovid. Lemuel followed, still showing no outward appearance of resentment.

‘How did you get away from your office?’ Benjulia inquired.

‘It’s easy to get a holiday at this time of year. Business is slack, old boy——’

‘Stop! I don’t allow you to speak to me in that way.’

‘No offence, brother Nathan!’

‘ Brother Lemuel, I never allow a fool to offend me. I put him in his place—that’s all.’

The distant barking of a dog became audible from the lane by which the house was approached. The sound seemed to annoy Benjulia. ‘ What’s that ? ’ he asked.

Lemuel saw his way to making some return for his brother’s reception of him.

‘ It’s my dog,’ he said ; ‘ and it’s lucky for you that I have left him in the cab.’

‘ Why ? ’

‘ Well, he’s as sweet-tempered a dog as ever lived. But he has one fault. He doesn’t take kindly to scientific gentlemen in your line of business.’ Lemuel paused, and pointed to his brother’s hands. ‘ If he smelt *that*, he might try his teeth at vivisectiong You.’

The spots of blood which Ovid had once seen on Benjulia’s stick, were on his hands now. With unruffled composure he looked at

the horrid stains, silently telling their tale of torture.

‘What’s the use of washing my hands,’ he answered, ‘when I am going back to my work?’

He wiped his finger and thumb on the tail of his coat. ‘Now,’ he resumed, ‘if you have got your letter with you, let me look at it.’

Lemuel produced the letter. ‘There are some bits in it,’ he explained, ‘which you had better not see. If you want the truth—that’s the reason why I brought it myself. Read the first page—and then I’ll tell you where to skip.’

So far, there was no allusion to Ovid. Benjulia turned to the second page—and Lemuel pointed to the middle of it. ‘Read as far as that,’ he went on, ‘and then skip till you come to the last bit at the end.’

On the last page, Ovid’s name appeared. He was mentioned, as a ‘delightful person,

introduced by your brother,'—and with that the letter ended. In the first bitterness of his disappointment, Benjulia conceived an angry suspicion of those portions of the letter which he had been requested to pass over unread.

'What has Morpew got to say to you that I mustn't read?' he asked.

'Suppose you tell me first, what you want to find in the letter,' Lemuel rejoined. 'Morpew is a doctor like you. Is it anything medical?'

Benjulia answered this in the easiest way—he nodded his head.

'Is it Vivisection?' Lemuel inquired slyly.

Benjulia at once handed the letter back, and pointed to the door. His momentary interest in the suppressed passages was at an end. 'That will do,' he answered. 'Take yourself and your letter away.'

'Ah,' said Lemuel, 'I'm glad you don't want to look at it again!' He put the letter

away, and buttoned his coat, and tapped his pocket significantly. 'You have got a nasty temper, Nathan—and there are things here that might try it.'

In the case of any other man, Benjulia would have seen that the one object of these prudent remarks was to irritate him. Misled by his profound conviction of his brother's stupidity, he now thought it possible that the concealed portions of the letter might be worth notice. He stopped Lemuel at the door. 'I've changed my mind,' he said; 'I want to look at the letter again.'

'You had better not,' Lemuel persisted. 'Morphew's going to write a book against you—and he asks me to get it published at our place. I'm on his side, you know; I shall do my best to help him; I can lay my hand on literary fellows who will lick his style into shape—it will be an awful exposure!' Benjulia still held out his hand. With over-acted

reluctance, Lemuel unbuttoned his coat. The distant dog barked again as he gave the letter back. 'Please excuse my dear old dog,' he said with maudlin tenderness; 'the poor dumb animal seems to know that I'm taking his side in the controversy. *Bow-wow* means, in his language, Fie upon the cruel hands that bore holes in our heads and use saws on our backs. Ah, Nathan, if you have got any dogs in that horrid place of yours, pat them and give them their dinner! You never heard me talk like this before—did you? I'm a new man since I joined the Society for suppressing you. Oh, if I only had the gift of writing!'

The effect of this experiment on his brother's temper, failed to fulfil Lemuel's expectations. The doctor's curiosity was roused on the doctor's own subject of inquiry.

'You're quite right about one thing,' said Benjulia gravely; 'I never heard you talk in this way before. You suggest some interest-

ing considerations, of the medical sort. Come to the light.' He led Lemuel to the window—looked at him with the closest attention—and carefully consulted his pulse. Lemuel smiled. 'I'm not joking,' said Benjulia sternly. 'Tell me this. Have you had headaches lately? Do you find your memory failing you?'

As he put those questions, he thought to himself—seriously thought—'Is this fellow's brain softening? I wish I had him on my table!'

Lemuel persisted in presenting himself under a sentimental aspect. He had not forgiven his elder brother's rudeness yet—and he knew, by experience, the one weakness in Benjulia's character which, with his small resources, it was possible to attack.

'Thank you for your kind inquiries,' he replied. 'Never mind my head, so long as my heart's in the right place. I don't pretend to be clever—but I've got my feelings; and I

could put some awkward questions on what you call Medical Research, if I had Morpheus to help me.'

'I'll help you,' said Benjulia—interested in developing the state of his brother's brain.

'I don't believe you,' said Lemuel—interested in developing the state of his brother's temper.

'Try me, Lemuel.'

'All right, Nathan.'

The two brothers returned to their chairs ; reduced for once to the same moral level.

CHAPTER XXXII.

‘Now,’ said Benjulia, ‘what is it to be? The favourite public bugbear? Vivisection?’

‘Yes.’

‘Very well. What can I do for you?’

‘Tell me first,’ said Lemuel, ‘what is Law?’

‘Nobody knows.’

‘Well, then, what *ought* it to be?’

‘Justice, I suppose.’

‘Let me wait a bit, Nathan, and get that into my mind.’

Benjulia waited with exemplary patience.

‘Now about yourself,’ Lemuel continued.

‘You won’t be offended—will you? Should I

be right, if I called you a dissector of living creatures?'

Benjulia was reminded of the day when he had discovered his brother in the laboratory. His dark complexion deepened in hue. His cold gray eyes seemed to promise a coming outbreak. Lemuel went on.

'Does the Law forbid you to make your experiments on a man?' he asked.

'Of course it does!'

'Why doesn't the Law forbid you to make your experiments on a dog?'

Benjulia's face cleared again. The one penetrable point in his ironclad nature had not been reached yet. That apparently childish question about the dog appeared, not only to have interested him, but to have taken him by surprise. His attention wandered away from his brother. His clear intellect put Lemuel's objection in closer logical form, and asked if there was any answer to it, thus:

The Law which forbids you to dissect a living man, allows you to dissect a living dog. Why?

There was positively no answer to this.

Suppose he said, Because a dog is an animal? Could he, as a physiologist, deny that a man is an animal too?

Suppose he said, Because a dog is the inferior creature in intellect? The obvious answer to this would be, But the lower order of savage, or the lower order of lunatic, compared with the dog, is the inferior creature in intellect; and, in these cases, the dog has, on your own showing, the better right to protection of the two.

Suppose he said, Because a man is a creature with a soul, and a dog is a creature without a soul? This would be simply inviting another unanswerable question: How do you know?

Honestly accepting the dilemma which

thus presented itself, the conclusion that followed seemed to be beyond dispute.

If the Law, in the matter of Vivisection, asserts the principle of interference, the Law has barred its right to place arbitrary limits on its own action. If it protects any living creatures, it is bound, in reason and in justice, to protect all.

‘ Well,’ said Lemuel, ‘ am I to have an answer ? ’

‘ I’m not a lawyer.’

With this convenient reply, Benjulia opened Mr. Morphew’s letter, and read the forbidden part of it which began on the second page. There he found the very questions with which his brother had puzzled him—followed by the conclusion at which he had himself arrived !

‘ You interpreted the language of your dog just now,’ he said quietly to Lemuel ; ‘ and I naturally supposed your brain might be soften-

ing. Such as it is, I perceive that your memory is in working order. Accept my excuses for feeling your pulse. You have ceased to be an object of interest to me.'

He returned to his reading. Lemuel watched him—still confidently waiting for results.

The letter proceeded in these terms :

'Your employer may perhaps be inclined to publish my work, if I can satisfy him that it will address itself to the general reader.'

'We all know what are the false pretences, under which English physiologists practise their cruelties. I want to expose those false pretences in the simplest and plainest way, by appealing to my own experience as an ordinary working member of the medical profession.

'Take the pretence of increasing our knowledge of the curative action of poisons, by trying them on animals. The very poisons, the

action of which dogs and cats have been needlessly tortured to demonstrate, I have successfully used on my human patients in the practice of a lifetime.

‘I should also like to ask what proof there is that the effect of a poison on an animal may be trusted to inform us, with certainty, of the effect of the same poison on a man. To quote two instances only which justify doubt—and to take birds this time, by way of a change—a pigeon will swallow opium enough to kill a man, and will not be in the least affected by it; and parsley, which is an innocent herb in the stomach of a human being, is deadly poison to a parrot.

‘I should deal in the same way, with the other pretence, of improving our practice of surgery by experiment on living animals.

‘Not long since, I saw the diseased leg of a dog cut off at the hip joint. When the limb was removed, not a single vessel bled. Try

the same operation on a man—and twelve or fifteen vessels must be tied as a matter of absolute necessity.

‘ Again. We are told by a great authority that the baking of dogs in ovens has led to new discoveries in treating fever. I have always supposed that the heat, in fever, is not a cause of disease, but a consequence. However, let that be, and let us still stick to experience. Has this infernal cruelty produced results which help us to cure scarlet fever? Our bedside practice tells us that scarlet fever runs its course as it always did. I can multiply such examples as these by hundreds when I write my book.

‘ Briefly stated, you now have the method by which I propose to drag the scientific English Savage from his shelter behind the medical interests of humanity, and to show him in his true character,—as plainly as the scientific Foreign Savage shows himself of his own

accord. *He* doesn't shrink behind false pretences. *He* doesn't add cant to cruelty. *He* boldly proclaims the truth:—I do it, because I like it !'

Benjulia rose, and threw the letter on the floor.

'*I* proclaim the truth,' he said ; '*I* do it because I like it. There are some few Englishmen who treat ignorant public opinion with the contempt that it deserves—and I am one of them.' He pointed scornfully to the letter. 'That wordy old fool is right about the false pretences. Publish his book, and I'll buy a copy of it.'

'That's odd,' said Lemuel.

'What's odd?'

'Well, Nathan, I'm only a fool—but if you talk in that way of false pretences and public opinion, why do you tell everybody that your horrid cutting and carving is harmless chemistry? And why were you in such a rage when

I got into your workshop, and found you out? Answer me that!’

‘Let me congratulate you first,’ said Benjamin. ‘It isn’t every fool who knows that he *is* a fool. Now you shall have your answer. Before the end of the year, all the world will be welcome to come into my workshop, and see me at the employment of my life. Brother Lemuel, when you stole your way through my unlocked door, you found me travelling on the road to the grandest medical discovery of this century. You stupid ass, do you think I cared about what *you* could find out? I am in such perpetual terror of being forestalled by my colleagues, that I am not master of myself, even when such eyes as yours look at my work. In a month or two more—perhaps in a week or two—I shall have solved the grand problem. I labour at it all day. I think of it, I dream of it, all night. It will kill me. Strong as I am, it will kill me. What do you say? Am

I working myself into my grave, in the medical interests of humanity? *That* for humanity! I am working for my own satisfaction—for my own pride—for my own unutterable pleasure in beating other men—for the fame that will keep my name living hundreds of years hence. Humanity! I say with my foreign brethren—Knowledge for its own sake, is the one god I worship. Knowledge is its own justification and its own reward. The roaring mob follows us with its cry of Cruelty. We pity their ignorance. Knowledge sanctifies cruelty. The old anatomist stole dead bodies for Knowledge. In that sacred cause, if I could steal a living man without being found out, I would tie him on my table, and grasp my grand discovery in days, instead of months. Where are you going? What? You're afraid to be in the same room with me? A man who can talk as I do, is a man who would stick at nothing? Is that the light in which you lower

order of creatures look at us? Look a little higher—and you will see that a man who talks as I do is a man set above you by Knowledge. Exert yourself, and try to understand me. Have I no virtues, even from your point of view? Am I not a good citizen? Don't I pay my debts? Don't I serve my friends? You miserable creature, you have had my money when you wanted it! Look at that letter on the floor. The man mentioned in it is one of those colleagues whom I distrust. I did my duty by him for all that. I gave him the information he wanted; I introduced him to a friend in a land of strangers. Have I no feeling, as you call it? My last experiments on a monkey horrified me. His cries of suffering, his gestures of entreaty, were like the cries and gestures of a child. I would have given the world to put him out of his misery. But I went on. In the glorious cause I went on. My hands turned cold—my heart ached—I

thought of a child I sometimes play with—I suffered—I resisted—I went on. All for Knowledge! all for Knowledge!’

His brother’s presence was forgotten. His dark face turned livid; his gigantic frame shuddered; his breath came and went in deep sobbing gasps—it was terrible to see him and hear him.

Lemuel slunk out of the room. The jackal had roused the lion; the mean spirit of mischief in him had not bargained for this. ‘I begin to believe in the devil,’ he said to himself when he got to the house door.

As he descended the steps, a carriage appeared in the lane. A footman opened the gate of the enclosure. The carriage approached the house, with a lady in it.

Lemuel ran back to his brother. ‘Here’s a lady coming!’ he said. ‘You’re in a nice state to see her! Pull yourself together, Nathan—and, damn it, wash your hands!’

He took Benjulia's arm, and led him upstairs.

When Lemuel returned to the hall, Mrs. Gallilee was ascending the house-steps. He bowed profoundly, in homage to the well-preserved remains of a fine woman. 'My brother will be with you directly, ma'am. Pray allow me to give you a chair.'

His hat was in his hand. Mrs. Gallilee's knowledge of the world easily set him down at his true value. She got rid of him with her best grace. 'Pray don't let me detain you, sir ; I will wait with pleasure.

If she had been twenty years younger the hint might have been thrown away. As it was, Lemuel retired.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AN unusually long day's work at the office had fatigued good Mr. Mool. He pushed aside his papers, and let his weary eyes rest on a glass vase full of flowers on the table—a present from a grateful client. As a man, he enjoyed the lovely colours of the nosegay. As a botanist, he lamented the act which had cut the flowers from their parent stems, and doomed them to premature death. ‘I should not have had the heart to do it myself,’ he thought; ‘but tastes differ.’

The office boy came into the room, with a visiting card in his hand.

‘I’m going home to dinner,’ said Mr. Mool.
‘The person must call to-morrow.’

The boy laid the card on the table. The person was Mrs. Gallilee.

Mrs. Gallilee, at seven o'clock in the evening! Mrs. Gallilee, without a previous appointment by letter! Mr. Mool trembled under the apprehension of some serious family emergency, in imminent need of legal interference. He submitted as a matter of course. 'Show the lady in.'

Before a word had passed between them, the lawyer's mind was relieved. Mrs. Gallilee shone on him with her sweetest smiles; pressed his hand with her friendliest warmth; admired the nosegay with her readiest enthusiasm. 'Quite perfect,' she said—'especially the Pansy. The round flat edge, Mr. Mool; the upper petals perfectly uniform—there is a flower that defies criticism! I long to dissect it.'

Mr. Mool politely resigned the Pansy to dissection (murderous mutilation, he would

have called it, in the case of one of his own flowers), and waited to hear what his learned client might have to say to him.

‘I am going to surprise you,’ Mrs. Gallilee announced. ‘No—to shock you. No—even that is not strong enough. Let me say, to horrify you.’

Mr. Mool’s anxieties returned, complicated by confusion. The behaviour of Mrs. Gallilee exhibited the most unaccountable contrast to her language. She showed no sign of those strong emotions to which she had alluded. ‘How am I to put it?’ she went on, with a transparent affectation of embarrassment. ‘Shall I call it a disgrace to our family?’ Mr. Mool started. Mrs. Gallilee entreated him to compose himself; she approached the inevitable disclosure by degrees. ‘I think,’ she said, ‘you have met Doctor Benjulia at my house?’

‘I have had that honour, Mrs. Gallilee.

Not a very sociable person—if I may venture to say so.’

‘Downright rude, Mr. Mool, on some occasions. But that doesn’t matter now. I have just been visiting the doctor.’

Was this visit connected with the ‘disgrace to the family?’ Mr. Mool ventured to put a question.

‘Doctor Benjulia is not related to you, ma’am—is he?’

‘Not the least in the world. Please don’t interrupt me again. I am, so to speak, laying a train of circumstances before you; and I might leave one of them out. When Doctor Benjulia was a young man—I am returning to my train of circumstances, Mr. Mool—he was at Rome, pursuing his professional studies. I have all this, mind, straight from the doctor himself. At Rome, he became acquainted with my late brother, after the period of his unfortunate marriage. Stop! I have failed

to put it strongly enough again. I ought to have said, his disgraceful marriage.'

'Really, Mrs. Gallilee——'

'Mr. Mool!'

'I beg your pardon, ma'am.'

'Don't mention it. The next circumstance is ready in my mind. One of the doctor's fellow-students (described as being personally an irresistible man) was possessed of abilities which even attracted our unsociable Benjulia. They became friends. At the time of which I am now speaking, my brother's disgusting wife—oh, but I repeat it, Mr. Mool! I say again, his disgusting wife—was the mother of a female child.'

'Your niece, Mrs. Gallilee.'

'No!'

'Not Miss Carmina?'

'Miss Carmina is no more my niece than she is your niece. Carry your mind back to what I have just said. I mentioned a medical

student who was an irresistible man. Miss Carmina's father was that man.'

Mr. Mool's astonishment and indignation would have instantly expressed themselves, if he had not been a lawyer. As it was, his professional experience warned him of the imprudence of speaking too soon.

Mrs. Gallilee's exultation forced its way outwards. Her eyes glittered ; her voice rose. 'The law, Mr. Mool ! what does the law say ?' she broke out. 'Is my brother's Will no better than waste-paper ? Is the money divided among his only near relations ? Tell me ! tell me !'

Mr. Mool suddenly plunged his face into his vase of flowers. Did he feel that the air of the office wanted purifying ? or was he conscious that his face might betray him unless he hid it ? Mrs. Gallilee was at no loss to set her own clever interpretation on her lawyer's extraordinary proceeding.

'Take your time,' she said with the most

patronising kindness. ‘I know your sensitive nature; I know what I felt myself when this dreadful discovery burst upon me. If you remember, I said I should horrify you. Take your time, my dear sir—pray take your time.’

To be encouraged in this way—as if he was the emotional client, and Mrs. Gallilee the impassive lawyer—was more than even Mr. Mool could endure. Shy men are, in the innermost depths of their nature, proud men: the lawyer had his professional pride. He came out of his flowery retreat, with a steady countenance. For the first time in his life, he was not afraid of Mrs. Gallilee.

‘Before we enter on the legal aspect of the case——’ he began.

‘The shocking case,’ Mrs. Gallilee interposed, in the interests of virtue.

Under any other circumstances Mr. Mool would have accepted the correction. He actually took no notice of it now! ‘There is one

point,' he proceeded, 'on which I must beg you to enlighten me.'

'By all means! I am ready to go into any details, no matter how disgusting they may be.'

Mr. Mool thought of certain 'ladies' (objects of perfectly needless respect among men) who, being requested to leave the Court, at unmentionable Trials, persist in keeping their places. It was a relief to him to feel—if his next questions did nothing else—that they would disappoint Mrs. Gallilee.

'Am I right in supposing that you believe what you have told me?' he resumed.

'Most assuredly!'

'Is Doctor Benjulia the only person who has spoken to you on the subject?'

'The only person.'

'His information being derived from his friend—the fellow-student whom you mentioned just now?'

'In other words,' Mrs. Gallilee answered

viciously, ‘the father of the wretched girl who has been foisted on my care.’

If Mr. Mool’s courage had been in danger of failing him, he would have found it again now. His regard for Carmina, his respect for the memory of her mother, had been wounded to the quick. Strong on his own legal ground, he proceeded as if he was examining a witness in a police court.

‘I suppose the doctor had some reason for believing what his friend told him?’

‘Ample reason ! Vice and poverty generally go together—*this* man was poor. He showed Doctor Benjulia money received from his mistress—her husband’s money, it is needless to say.’

‘Her motive might be innocent, Mrs. Gallilee. Had the man any letters of hers to show?’

‘Letters? From a woman in her position? It’s notorious, Mr. Mool, that Italian models don’t know how to read or write.’

‘May I ask if there are any further proofs?’

‘You have had proofs enough.’

‘With all possible respect, ma’am, I deny that.’

Mrs. Gallilee had not been asked to enter into disgusting details. Mrs. Gallilee had been contradicted by her obedient humble servant of other days. She thought it high time to bring the examination to an end.

‘If you are determined to believe in the woman’s innocence,’ she said, ‘without knowing any of the circumstances——’

Mr. Mool went on from bad to worse: he interrupted her now.

‘Excuse me, Mrs. Gallilee, I think you have forgotten that one of my autumn holidays, many years since, was spent in Italy. I was in Rome, like Doctor Benjulia, after your brother’s marriage. His wife was, to my certain knowledge, received in society. Her reputation was unblemished; and her husband was devoted to her.’

‘In plain English,’ said Mrs. Gallilee, ‘my brother was a poor weak creature—and his wife, when you knew her, had not been found out.’

‘That is just the difficulty I feel,’ Mr. Mool rejoined. ‘How is it that she is only found out now? Years have passed since she died. More years have passed since this attack on her character reached Doctor Benjulia’s knowledge. He is an old friend of yours. Why has he only told you of it to-day? I hope I don’t offend you by asking these questions?’

‘Oh, dear, no! your questions are so easily answered. I never encouraged the doctor to speak of my brother and his wife. The subject was too distasteful to me—and I don’t doubt that Doctor Benjulia felt about it as I did.’

‘Until to-day,’ the lawyer remarked; ‘Doctor Benjulia appears to have been quite ready to mention the subject to-day.’

‘Under special circumstances, Mr. Mool.

Perhaps, you will not allow that special circumstances make any difference ? ’

On the contrary, Mr. Mool made every allowance. At the same time, he waited to hear what the circumstances might be.

But Mrs. Gallilee had her reasons for keeping silence. It was impossible to mention Benjulia’s reception of her without inflicting a wound on her self-esteem. To begin with, he had kept the door of the room open, and had remained standing. ‘Have you got Ovid’s letters ? Leave them here ; I’m not fit to look at them now.’ Those were his first words. There was nothing in the letters which a friend might not read : she accordingly consented to leave them. The doctor had expressed his sense of obligation by bidding her get into her carriage again, and go. ‘I have been put in a passion ; I have made a fool of myself ; I haven’t a nerve in my body that isn’t quivering with rage. Go ! go ! go !’ There was his

explanation. Impenetrably obstinate, Mrs. Gallilee faced him—standing between the doctor and the door—without shrinking. She had not driven all the way to Benjulia's house to be sent back again without gaining her object: she had her questions to put to him, and she persisted in pressing them as only a woman can. He was left—with the education of a gentleman against him—between the two vulgar alternatives of turning her out by main force, or of yielding, and getting rid of her decently in that way. At any other time, he would have flatly refused to lower himself to the level of a scandal-mongering woman, by entering on the subject. In his present mood, if pacifying Mrs. Gallilee, and ridding himself of Mrs. Gallilee, meant one and the same thing, he was ready, recklessly ready, to let her have her own way. She heard the infamous story, which she had repeated to her lawyer; and she had Lemuel Benjulia's visit, and Mr. Morpew's

contemplated attack on Vivisection, to thank for getting her information.

Mr. Mool waited, and waited in vain. He reminded his client of what she had just said.

‘You mentioned certain circumstances. May I know what they are?’ he asked.

Mrs. Gallilee rose, before she replied.

‘Your time is valuable, and my time is valuable,’ she said. ‘We shall not convince each other by prolonging our conversation. I came here, Mr. Mool, to ask you a question about the law. Permit me to remind you that I have not had my answer yet. My own impression is that the girl now in my house, not being my brother’s child, has no claim on my brother’s property? Tell me in two words, if you please—am I right or wrong?’

‘I can do it in one word, Mrs. Gallilee. Wrong.’

‘What!’

Mr. Mool entered on the necessary explana-

tion, triumphing in the reply that he had just made. 'It's the smartest thing,' he thought, 'I ever said in my life.'

'While husbands and wives live together,' he continued, 'the Law holds that all children, born in wedlock, are the husband's children. Even if Miss Carmina's mother had not been as good and innocent a woman as ever drew the breath of life——'

'That will do, Mr. Mool. You really mean to say that this girl's interest in my brother's Will——'

'Remains quite unaffected, ma'am, by all that you have told me.'

'And I am still obliged to keep her under my care?'

'Or,' Mr. Mool answered, 'to resign the office of guardian, in favour of Lady Northlake——appointed to act, in your place.'

'I won't trouble you any further, sir. Good-evening!'

She turned to leave the office. Mr. Mool actually tried to stop her.

‘One word more, Mrs. Gallilee.’

‘No ; we have said enough already.’

Mr. Mool’s audacity arrived at its climax. He put his hand on the lock of the office door, and held it shut.

‘The young lady, Mrs. Gallilee ! I am sure you will never breathe a word of this to the pretty gentle, young lady ? Even if it was true ; and, as God is my witness, I am sure it’s false——

‘Good-evening, Mr. Mool !’

He opened the door, and let her go ; her looks and tones told him that remonstrance was worse than useless. From year’s end to year’s end, this modest and amiable man had never been heard to swear. He swore now. ‘Damn Doctor Benjulia !’ he burst out, in the solitude of the office. His dinner was waiting for him at home. Instead of putting on his hat, he

went back to his writing-table. His thoughts projected themselves into the future—and discovered possibilities from which they recoiled. He took up his pen, and began a letter. ‘To John Gallilee, Esquire: Dear Sir,—Circumstances have occurred, which I am not at liberty to mention, but which make it necessary for me, in justice to my own views and feelings, to withdraw from the position of legal adviser to yourself and family.’ He paused and considered with himself. ‘No,’ he decided; ‘I may be of some use to that poor child, while I am the family lawyer.’ He tore up his unfinished letter.

When Mr. Mool got home that night, it was noticed that he had a poor appetite for his dinner. On the other hand, he drank more wine than usual.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

‘I DON’T know what is the matter with me. Sometimes I think I am going to be really ill.’

It was the day after Mrs. Gallilee’s interview with her lawyer—and this was Carmina’s answer, when the governess entered her room, after the lessons of the morning, and asked if she felt better.

‘Are you still taking medicine?’ Miss Minerva inquired.

‘Yes. Mr. Null says it’s a tonic, and it’s sure to do me good. It doesn’t seem to have begun yet. I feel so dreadfully weak, Frances. The least thing makes me cry; and I put off doing what I ought to do, and want to do,

without knowing why. You remember what I told you about Teresa? She may be with us in a few days more, for all I know to the contrary. I must find a nice lodging for her, poor dear—and here I am, thinking about it instead of doing it.’

‘Let me do it,’ Miss Minerva suggested.

Carmina’s sad face brightened. ‘That’s kind indeed!’ she said.

‘Nonsense! I shall take the children out, after dinner to-day. Looking over lodgings will be an amusement to me and to them.’

‘Where is Zo? Why haven’t you brought her with you?’

‘She is having her music lesson—and I must go back to keep her in order. About the lodging? A sitting-room and bedroom will be enough, I suppose? In this neighbourhood, I am afraid the terms will be rather high.’

‘Oh, never mind that! Let us have clean

airy rooms—and a kind landlady. Teresa mustn't know it, if the terms are high.'

'Will she allow you to pay her expenses?'

'Ah, *you* put it delicately! My aunt seemed to doubt if Teresa had any money of her own. I forgot, at the time, that my father had left her a little income. She told me so herself, and wondered, poor dear, how she was to spend it all. She mustn't be allowed to spend it all. We will tell her that the terms are half what they may really be—and I will pay the other half. Isn't it cruel of my aunt not to let my old nurse live in the same house with me?'

At that moment, a message arrived from one of the persons of whom she was speaking. Mrs. Gallilee wished to see Miss Carmina immediately.

'My dear,' said Miss Minerva, when the servant had withdrawn, 'why do you tremble so?'

‘ There’s something in me, Frances, that shudders at my aunt, ever since——’

She stopped.

Miss Minerva understood that sudden pause—the undesigned allusion to Carmina’s guiltless knowledge of her feeling towards Ovid. By unexpressed consent, on either side, they still preserved their former relations as if Mrs. Gallilee had not spoken. Miss Minerva looked at Carmina sadly and kindly. ‘ Good-bye for the present ! ’ she said—and went upstairs again to the schoolroom.

In the hall, Carmina found the servant waiting for her. He opened the library door. The learned lady was at her studies.

‘ I have been speaking to Mr. Null about you,’ said Mrs. Gallilee.

On the previous evening, Carmina had kept her room. She had breakfasted in bed—and she now saw her aunt for the first time, since Mrs. Gallilee had left the house on her visit to

Benjulia. The girl was instantly conscious of a change—to be felt rather than to be realised—a subtle change in her aunt's way of looking at her and speaking to her. Her heart beat fast. She took the nearest chair in silence.

‘The doctor,’ Mrs. Gallilee proceeded, ‘thinks it of importance to your health to be as much as possible in the air. He wishes you to drive out every day, while the fine weather lasts. I have ordered the open carriage to be ready, after luncheon. Other engagements will prevent me from accompanying you. You will be under the care of my maid, and you will be out for two hours. Mr. Null hopes you will gain strength. Is there anything you want?’

‘Nothing—thank you.’

‘Perhaps you wish for a new dress?’

‘Oh, no!’

‘You have no complaint to make of the servants?’

‘The servants are always kind to me.’

‘I needn’t detain you any longer—I have a person coming to speak to me.’

Carmina had entered the room in doubt and fear. She left it with strangely-mingled feelings of perplexity and relief. Her sense of a mysterious change in her aunt had strengthened with every word that Mrs. Gallilee had said to her. She had heard of reformatory institutions, and of discreet persons called matrons who managed them. In her imaginary picture of such places, Mrs. Gallilee’s tone and manner realised, in the strangest way, her idea of a matron speaking to a penitent.

As she crossed the hall, her thoughts took a new direction. Some indefinable distrust of the coming time got possession of her. An ugly model of the Colosseum, in cork, stood on the hall table. She looked at it absently. ‘I hope Teresa will come soon,’ she thought—and turned away to the stairs.

She ascended slowly ; her head drooping, her mind still preoccupied. Arrived at the first landing, a sound of footsteps disturbed her. She looked up—and found herself face to face with Mr. Le Frank, leaving the schoolroom after his music lesson. At that sudden discovery, a cry of alarm escaped her—the common little scream of a startled woman. Mr. Le Frank made an elaborately formal bow : he apologised with sternly stupid emphasis. ‘*I beg your pardon.*’

Moved by a natural impulse, penitently conscious of those few foolish words of hers which he had so unfortunately overheard, the poor girl made an effort to conciliate him. ‘I have very few friends, Mr. Le Frank,’ she said timidly. ‘May I still consider you as one of them? Will you forgive and forget? Will you shake hands?’

Mr. Le Frank made another magnificent bow. He was proud of his voice. In his most

resonant and mellifluous tones, he said, 'You do me honour——' and took the offered hand, and lifted it grandly, and touched it with his lips.

She held by the baluster with her free hand, and controlled the sickening sensation which that momentary contact with him produced. He might have detected the outward signs of the struggle, but for an interruption which preserved her from discovery. Mrs. Gallilee was standing at the open library door. Mrs. Gallilee said, 'I am waiting for you, Mr. Le Frank.'

Carmina hurried up the stairs, pursued already by a sense of her own imprudence. In her first confusion and dismay, but one clear idea presented itself. 'Oh!' she said, 'have I made another mistake?'

Meanwhile, Mrs. Gallilee had received her music-master with the nearest approach to an indulgent welcome, of which a hardened nature is capable.

‘Take the easy chair, Mr. Le Frank. You are not afraid of the open window?’

‘Oh, dear, no! I like it.’ He rapidly unrolled some leaves of music which he had brought downstairs. ‘With regard to the song that I had the honour of mentioning——’

Mrs. Gallilee pointed to the table. ‘Put the song there for the present. I have a word to say first. How came you to frighten my niece? I heard something like a scream, and naturally looked out. She was making an apology; she asked you to forgive and forget. What does all this mean?’

Mr. Le Frank exhausted his ingenuity in efforts of polite evasion—without the slightest success. From first to last (if the expression may be permitted) Mrs. Gallilee had him under her thumb. He was not released, until he had literally reported Carmina’s opinion of him as a man and a musician, and had exactly

described the circumstances under which he had heard it. Mrs. Gallilee listened with an interest, which (under less embarrassing circumstances) would have even satisfied Mr. Le Frank's vanity.

She was not for a moment deceived by the clumsy affectation of good humour with which he told his story. Her penetration discovered the vindictive feeling towards Carmina, which offered him, in case of necessity, as an instrument ready made to her hand. By fine degrees, she presented herself in the new character of a sympathising friend.

‘I know now, Mr. Le Frank, why you declined to be my niece's music-master. Allow me to apologise for having ignorantly placed you in a false position. I appreciate the delicacy of your conduct—I understand, and admire you.’

Mr. Le Frank's florid cheeks turned redder still. His cold blood began to simmer, heated

by an all-pervading glow of flattered self-esteem.

‘My niece’s motives for concealment are plain enough,’ Mrs. Gallilee proceeded. ‘Let me hope that she was ashamed to confess the total want of taste, delicacy, and good manners which has so justly offended you. Miss Minerva, however, has no excuse for keeping me in the dark. Her conduct, in this matter, offers, I regret to say, one more instance of her habitual neglect of the duties which attach to her position in my house. There seems to be some private understanding between my governess and my niece, of which I highly disapprove. However, the subject is too distasteful to dwell on. You were speaking of your song—the last effort of your genius, I think?’

His ‘genius’! The inner glow in Mr. Le Frank grew warmer and warmer. ‘I asked for the honour of an interview,’ he explained, ‘to make a request.’ He took up his leaves of

music. ‘This is my last, and, I hope, my best effort at composition. May I dedicate it——?’

‘To me!’ Mrs. Gallilee exclaimed with a burst of enthusiasm.

Mr. Le Frank felt the compliment. He bowed gratefully.

‘Need I say how gladly I accept the honour?’ With this gracious answer Mrs. Gallilee rose.

Was the change of position a hint, suggesting that Mr. Le Frank might leave her to her studies, now that his object was gained? Or was it an act of homage offered by Science to Art? Mr. Le Frank was incapable of placing an unfavourable interpretation on any position which a woman—and such a woman—could assume in his presence. He felt the compliment again. ‘The first copy published shall be sent to you,’ he said—and snatched up his hat, eager to set the printers at work.

‘And five-and-twenty copies more, for

which I subscribe,' cried his munificent patroness, cordially shaking hands with him.

Mr. Le Frank attempted to express his sense of obligation. Generous Mrs. Gallilee refused to hear him. He took his leave; he got as far as the hall; and then he was called back—softly, confidentially called back to the library.

'A thought has just struck me,' said Mrs. Gallilee. 'Please shut the door for a moment. About that meeting between you and my niece? Perhaps, I am taking a morbid view?'

She paused. Mr. Le Frank waited with breathless interest.

'Or *is* there something out of the common way, in that apology of hers?' Mrs. Gallilee proceeded. 'Have you any idea what the motive might be?'

Mr. Le Frank's ready suspicion was instantly aroused. 'Not the least idea,' he answered. 'Can you tell me?'

‘I am as completely puzzled as you are,’ Mrs. Gallilee rejoined.

Mr. Le Frank considered. His suspicions made an imaginative effort, assisted by his vanity. ‘After my refusal to teach her,’ he suggested, ‘that proposal to shake hands may have a meaning——’ There, his invention failed him. He stopped, and shook his head ominously.

Mrs. Gallilee’s object being attained, she made no attempt to help him. ‘Perhaps, time will show,’ she answered discreetly. ‘Good-bye again—with best wishes for the success of the song.’

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE solitude of her own room was no welcome refuge to Carmina, in her present state of mind. She went on to the schoolroom.

Miss Minerva was alone. The two girls, in obedience to domestic regulations, were making their midday toilet before dinner. Carmina described her interview with Mrs. Gallilee, and her meeting with Mr. Le Frank. ‘Don’t scold me,’ she said; ‘I make no excuse for my folly.’

‘If Mr. Le Frank had left the house, after you spoke to him,’ Miss Minerva answered, ‘I should not have felt the anxiety which troubles me now. I don’t like his going to Mrs. Gallilee afterwards—especially when you tell me of that change in her manner towards you.’

Yours is a vivid imagination, Carmina. Are you sure that it has not been playing you any tricks?’

‘Perfectly sure.’

Miss Minerva was not quite satisfied. ‘Will you help me to feel as certain about it as you do?’ she asked. ‘Mrs. Gallilee generally looks in for a few minutes, while the children are at dinner. Stay here, and say something to her in my presence. I want to judge for myself.’

The girls came in. Maria’s perfect toilet, reflected Maria’s perfect character. She performed the duties of politeness with her usual happy choice of words. ‘Dear Carmina, it is indeed a pleasure to see you again in our schoolroom. We are naturally anxious about your health. This lovely weather is no doubt in your favour; and papa thinks Mr. Null a remarkably clever man.’ Zo stood by frowning, while these smooth conventionalities trickled

over her sister's lips. Carmina asked what was the matter. Zo looked gloomily at the dog on the rug. 'I wish I was Tinker,' she said. Maria smiled sweetly. 'Dear Zoe, what a very strange wish! What would you do, if you were Tinker?' The dog, hearing his name, rose and shook himself. Zo pointed to him, with an appearance of the deepest interest. '*He* hasn't got to brush his hair, before he goes out for a walk; *his* nails don't look black when they're dirty. And, I say!' (she whispered the next words in Carmina's ear) '*he* hasn't got a governess.'

The dinner made its appearance; and Mrs. Gallilee followed the dinner. Maria said grace. Zo, always ravenous at meals, forgot to say Amen. Carmina, standing behind her chair, prompted her. Zo said 'Amen; oh, bother!' the first word at the top of her voice, and the last two in a whisper. Mrs. Gallilee looked at Carmina as she might have looked at an ob-

trusive person who had stepped in from the street. 'You had better dress before luncheon,' she suggested, 'or you will keep the carriage waiting.' Hearing this, Zo laid down her knife and fork, and looked over her shoulder. 'Ask if I may go with you,' she said. Carmina made the request. 'No,' Mrs. Gallilee answered, 'the children must walk. My maid will accompany you.' Carmina glanced at Miss Minerva on leaving the room. The governess replied by a look. She too had seen the change in Mrs. Gallilee's manner, and was at a loss to understand it.

Mrs. Gallilee's maid Marceline belonged to a quick-tempered race: she was a Jersey woman. It is not easy to say which of the two felt most oppressed by their enforced companionship in the carriage.

The maid was perhaps the most to be pitied. Secretly drawn towards Carmina like the other servants in the house, she was forced

by her mistress's private instructions, to play the part of a spy. 'If the young lady changes the route which the coachman has my orders to take, or if she communicates with any person while you are out, you are to report it to me.' Mrs. Gallilee had not forgotten the discovery of the travelling bag; and Mr. Mool's exposition of the law had informed her, that the superintendence of Carmina was as much a matter of serious pecuniary interest as ever.

But recent events had, in one respect at least, improved the prospect.

If Ovid (as his mother actually ventured to hope!) broke off his engagement, when he heard the scandalous story of Carmina's birth, there was surely a chance that she, like other girls of her sensitive temperament, might feel the calamity that had fallen on her so acutely as to condemn herself to a single life. Misled, partly by the hope of relief from her own vile anxieties; partly by the heartless incapability

of appreciating generous feeling in others, developed by the pursuits of her later life, Mrs. Gallilee seriously contemplated her son's future decision as a matter of reasonable doubt.

In the meanwhile, this detestable child of adultery—this living obstacle in the way of the magnificent prospects which otherwise awaited Maria and Zoe, to say nothing of their mother—must remain in the house, submitted to her guardian's authority, watched by her guardian's vigilance. The hateful creature was still entitled to medical attendance when she was ill, and must still be supplied with every remedy that the doctor's ingenuity could suggest. A liberal allowance was paid for the care of her; and the trustees were bound to interfere if it was not fairly earned.

Looking after the carriage as it drove away—Marceline on the front seat presenting the picture of discomfort; and Carmina opposite to her, unendurably pretty and interesting, with

the last new poem on her lap—Mrs. Gallilee's reflections took their own bitter course. 'Accidents happen to other carriages, with other girls in them. Not to my carriage, with that girl in it! Nothing will frighten *my* horses to-day; and, fat as he is, *my* coachman will not have a fit on the box!'

It was only too true. At the appointed hour the carriage appeared again—and (to complete the disappointment) Marceline had no report to make.

Miss Minerva had not forgotten her promise. When she returned from her walk with the children, the rooms had been taken. Teresa's London lodging was within five minutes' walk of the house.

That evening, Carmina sent a telegram to Rome, on the chance that the nurse might not yet have begun her journey. The message (deferring other explanations until they met)

merely informed her that her rooms were ready, adding the address and the landlady's name. Guessing in the dark, Carmina and the governess had ignorantly attributed the sinister alteration in Mrs. Gallilee's manner to the prospect of Teresa's unwelcome return. 'While you have the means in your power,' Miss Minerva advised, 'it may be as well to let your old friend know that there is a home for her when she reaches London.'

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE weather, to Carmina's infinite relief, changed for the worse on the next day. Incessant rain made it impossible to send her out in the carriage again.

But it was an eventful day, nevertheless. On that rainy afternoon, Mr. Gallilee asserted himself as a free agent, in the terrible presence of his wife !

‘It’s an uncommonly dull day, my dear,’ he began. This passed without notice, which was a great encouragement to go on. ‘If you will allow me to say so, Carmina wants a little amusement.’ Mrs. Gallilee looked up from her book. Fearing that he might stop altogether if he took his time as usual, Mr. Gallilee pro-

ceeded in a hurry. ‘There’s an afternoon performance of conjuring tricks ; and, do you know, I really think I might take Carmina to see it. We shall be delighted if you will accompany us, my dear ; and they do say—perhaps you have heard of it yourself?—that there’s a good deal of science in this exhibition.’ His eyes rolled in uneasy expectation, as he waited to hear what his wife might decide. She waved her hand contemptuously in the direction of the door. Mr. Gallilee retired with the alacrity of a young man. ‘Now we shall enjoy ourselves!’ he thought as he went up to Carmina’s room.

They were just leaving the house, when the music-master arrived at the door to give his lesson.

Mr. Gallilee immediately put his head out of the cab window. ‘We are going to see the conjuring!’ he shouted cheerfully. ‘Carmina! don’t you see Mr. Le Frank? He is bowing to

you. Do you like conjuring, Mr. Le Frank? Don't tell the children where we are going! They would be disappointed, poor things—but they must have their lessons, mustn't they? Good-bye! I say! stop a minute. If you ever want your umbrella mended, I know a man who will do it cheap and well. Nasty day, isn't it? Go on! go on!'

The general opinion which ranks vanity among the lighter failings of humanity, commits a serious mistake. Vanity wants nothing but the motive power to develop into absolute wickedness. Vanity can be savagely suspicious and diabolically cruel. What are the two typical names which stand revealed in history as the names of the two vainest men that ever lived? Nero and Robespierre.

In his obscure sphere, and within his restricted means, the vanity of Mrs. Gallilee's music-master had developed its inherent qualities, under her cunning and guarded

instigation. Once set in action, his suspicion of Carmina passed beyond all limits. There could be no reason but a bad reason for that barefaced attempt to entrap him into a reconciliation. Every evil motive which it was possible to attribute to a girl of her age, no matter how monstrously improbable it might be, occurred to him when he recalled her words, her look, and her manner at their meeting on the stairs. His paltry little mind, at other times preoccupied in contemplating himself and his abilities, was now so completely absorbed in imagining every variety of conspiracy against his social and professional position, that he was not even capable of giving his customary lesson to two children. Before the appointed hour had expired, Miss Minerva remarked that his mind did not appear to be at ease, and suggested that he had better renew the lesson on the next day. After a futile attempt to assume an appearance

of tranquillity—he thanked her and took his leave.

On his way downstairs, he found the door of Carmina's room left half open.

She was absent with Mr. Gallilee. Miss Minerva remained upstairs with the children. Mrs. Gallilee was engaged in scientific research. At that hour of the afternoon, there were no duties which called the servants to the upper part of the house. He listened—he hesitated—he went into the room.

It was possible that she might keep a journal: it was certain that she wrote and received letters. If he could only find her desk unlocked and her drawers open, the inmost secrets of her life would be at his mercy.

He tried her desk; he tried the cupboard under the bookcase. They were both locked. The cabinet between the windows and the drawer of the table were left unguarded. No

discovery rewarded the careful search that he pursued in these two repositories. He opened the books that she had left on the table, and shook them. No forgotten letter, no private memorandum (used as marks) dropped out. He looked all round him ; he peeped into the bedroom ; he listened, to make sure that nobody was outside ; he entered the bedroom, and examined the toilet-table, and opened the doors of the wardrobe--and still the search was fruitless, persevere as he might.

Returning to the sitting-room, he shook his fist at the writing-desk. ‘You wouldn’t be locked,’ he thought, ‘unless you had some shameful secrets to keep ! *I* shall have other opportunities ; and *she* may not always remember to turn the key.’ He stole quietly down the stairs, and met no one on his way out.

The bad weather continued on the next day. The object of Mr. Le Frank’s suspicion

remained in the house—and the second opportunity failed to offer itself as yet.

The visit to the exhibition of conjuring had done Carmina harm instead of good. Her head ached, in the close atmosphere—she was too fatigued to be able to stay in the room until the performance came to an end. Poor Mr. Gallilee retired in disgrace to the shelter of his club. At dinner, even his perfect temper failed him for the moment. He found fault with the champagne—and then apologised to the waiter. ‘I’m sorry I was a little hard on you just now. The fact is, I’m out of sorts—you have felt in that way yourself, haven’t you? The wine’s first-rate; and, really the weather is so discouraging, I think I’ll try another pint.’

But Carmina’s buoyant heart defied the languor of illness and the gloomy day. The post had brought her a letter from Ovid—enclosing a photograph, taken at Montreal,

which presented him in his travelling costume.

He wrote in a tone of cheerfulness, which revived Carmina's sinking courage, and renewed for a time at least the happiness of other days. The air of the plains of Canada he declared to be literally intoxicating. Every hour seemed to be giving him back the vital energy that he had lost in his London life. He slept on the ground, in the open air, more soundly than he had ever slept in a bed. But one anxiety troubled his mind. In the roving life which he now enjoyed, it was impossible that his letters could follow him—and yet, every day that passed made him more unreasonably eager to hear that Carmina was not weary of waiting for him, and that all was well at home.

‘And how have these vain aspirations of mine ended?’—the letter went on. ‘They have ended, my darling, in a journey for one of my guides—an Indian, whose fidelity I have put to

the proof, and whose zeal I have stimulated by a promise of reward.

‘The Indian takes these lines to be posted at Quebec. He is also provided with an order, authorising my bankers to trust him with the letters that are waiting for me. I begin a canoe voyage to-morrow ; and, after due consultation with the crew, we have arranged a date and a place at which my messenger will find me on his return. Shall I confess my own amiable weakness ? or do you know me well enough already to suspect the truth ? My love, I am sorely tempted to be false to my plans and arrangements—to go back with the Indian to Quebec—and to take a berth in the first steamer that returns to England.

‘Don’t suppose that I am troubled by any misgivings about what is going on in my absence ! It is one of the good signs of my returning health that I take the brightest view of our present lives, and of our lives to come.

I feel tempted to go back, for the same reason that makes me anxious for letters. I want to hear from you, because I love you—I want to return at once, because I love you. There is longing, unutterable longing, in my heart. No doubts, my sweet one, and no fears!

‘But I was a doctor, before I became a lover. My medical knowledge tells me that this is an opportunity of thoroughly fortifying my constitution, and (with God’s blessing) of securing to myself reserves of health and strength which will take us together happily on the way to old age. Dear love, you must be my wife—not my nurse! There is the thought that gives me self-denial enough to let the Indian go away by himself.’

Carmina answered this letter as soon as she had read it.

Before the mail could carry her reply to its destination, she well knew that the Indian

messenger would be on the way back to his master. But Ovid had made her so happy that she felt the impulse to write to him at once, as she might have felt the impulse to answer him at once if he had been present and speaking to her. When the pages were filled, and the letter had been closed and addressed, the effort produced its depressing effect on her spirits.

There now appeared to her a certain wisdom in the loving rapidity of her reply.

Even in the fulness of her joy, she was conscious of an underlying distrust of herself. Although he refused to admit it, Mr. Null had betrayed a want of faith in the remedy from which he had anticipated such speedy results, by writing another prescription. He had also added a glass to the daily allowance of wine, which he had thought sufficient thus far. Without despairing of herself, Carmina felt that she had done wisely in writing her answer,

while she was still well enough to rival the cheerful tone of Ovid's letter.

She laid down to rest on the sofa, with the photograph in her hand. No sense of loneliness oppressed her now ; the portrait was the best of all companions. Outside, the heavy rain pattered ; in the room, the busy clock ticked. She listened lazily, and looked at her lover, and kissed the faithful image of him—peacefully happy.

The opening of the door was the first little event that disturbed her. Zo peeped in. Her face was red, her hair was tousled, her fingers presented inky signs of a recent writing lesson.

‘I'm in a rage,’ she announced ; ‘and so is the Other One.’

Carmina called her to the sofa, and tried to find out who this second angry person might be. ‘Oh, you know!’ Zo answered doggedly. ‘She rapped my knuckles. I call her a Beast.’

‘Hush! you mustn’t talk in that way.’

‘She’ll be here directly,’ Zo proceeded. ‘You look out! She’d rap *your* knuckles—only you’re too big. If it wasn’t raining, I’d run away.’ Carmina assumed an air of severity, and entered a serious protest adapted to her young friend’s intelligence. She might as well have spoken in a foreign language. Zo had another reason to give, besides the rap on the knuckles, for running away.

‘I say!’ she resumed—‘you know the boy?’

‘What boy, dear?’

‘He comes round sometimes. He’s got a hurdy-gurdy. He’s got a monkey. He grins. He says, *Aha-gimmee-haypenny*. I mean to go to that boy!’

As a confession of Zo’s first love, this was irresistible. Carmina burst out laughing. Zo indignantly claimed a hearing. ‘I haven’t done yet!’ she burst out. ‘The boy dances. Like

this.' She cocked her head, and slapped her thigh, and imitated the boy. 'And sometimes he sings!' she cried with another outburst of admiration. '*Yah-yah-yah-bellah-vitah-yah!* That's Italian, Carmina.' The door opened again while the performer was in full vigour—and Miss Minerva appeared.

When she entered the room, Carmina at once saw that Zo had correctly observed her governess. Miss Minerva's heavy eyebrows lowered; her lips were pale; her head was held angrily erect. 'Carmina!' she said sharply, 'you shouldn't encourage that child.' She turned round, in search of the truant pupil. Incurably stupid at her lessons, Zo's mind had its gleams of intelligence, in a state of liberty. One of those gleams had shone propitiously, and had lighted her out of the room.

Miss Minerva took a chair: she dropped into it like a person worn out with fatigue.

Carmina spoke to her gently. Words of sympathy were thrown away on that self-tormenting nature.

‘No; I’m not ill,’ she said. ‘A night without sleep; a perverse child to teach in the morning; and a detestable temper at all times—that’s what is the matter with me.’ She looked at Carmina. ‘You seem to be wonderfully better to-day. Has stupid Mr. Null really done you some good at last?’ She noticed the open writing-desk, and discovered the letter. ‘Or is it good news?’

‘I have heard from Ovid,’ Carmina answered. The photograph was still in her hand; but her inbred delicacy of feeling kept the portrait hidden.

The governess’s sallow complexion turned little by little to a dull greyish white. Her hands, loosely clasped in her lap, tightened when she heard Ovid’s name. That slight movement over, she stirred no more. After

waiting a little, Carmina ventured to speak. ‘Frances,’ she said, ‘you have not shaken hands with me yet.’ Miss Minerva slowly looked up, keeping her hands still clasped on her lap.

‘When is he coming back?’ she asked. It was said quietly.

Carmina quietly replied, ‘Not yet—I am sorry to say.’

‘I am sorry too.’

‘It’s good of you, Frances, to say that.’

‘No : it’s not good of me. I’m thinking of myself—not of you.’ She suddenly lowered her tone. ‘I wish you were married to him,’ she said.

There was a pause. Miss Minerva was the first to speak again.

‘Do you understand me?’ she asked.

‘Perhaps you will help me to understand,’ Carmina answered.

‘If you were married to him, even my rest-

less spirit might be at peace. The struggle would be over.'

She left her chair, and walked restlessly up and down the room. The passionate emotion which she had resolutely suppressed began to get beyond her control.

'I was thinking about you last night,' she abruptly resumed. 'You are a gentle little creature—but I have seen you show some spirit, when your aunt's cold-blooded insolence roused you. Do you know what I would do, if I were in your place? I wouldn't wait tamely till he came back to me—I would go to him. Carmina! Carmina! leave this horrible house!' She stopped, close by the sofa. 'Let me look at you. Ha! I believe you have thought of it yourself?'

'I have thought of it.'

'What did I say? You poor little prisoner, you *have* the right spirit in you! I wish I could give you some of my strength.' The

half-mocking tone in which she spoke, suddenly failed her. Her piercing eyes grew dim ; the hard lines in her face softened. She dropped on her knees, and wound her lithe arms round Carmina, and kissed her. ‘You sweet child!’ she said—and burst passionately into tears.

Even then, the woman’s fiercely self-dependent nature asserted itself. She pushed Carmina back on the sofa. ‘Don’t look at me! don’t speak to me!’ she gasped. ‘Leave me to get over it.’

She stifled the sobs that broke from her. Still on her knees, she looked up, shuddering. A ghastly smile distorted her lips. ‘Ah, what fools we are!’ she said. ‘Where is that lavender water, my dear—your favourite remedy for a burning head?’ She found the bottle before Carmina could help her, and soaked her handkerchief in the lavender water, and tied it round her head. ‘Yes,’ she went

on, as if they had been gossiping on the most commonplace subjects, 'I think you're right : this is the best of all perfumes.' She looked at the clock. 'The children's dinner will be ready in ten minutes. I must, and will, say what I have to say to you. It may be the last poor return I can make, Carmina, for all your kindness.'

She returned to her chair.

'I can't help it if I frighten you,' she resumed ; 'I must tell you plainly that I don't like the prospect. In the first place, the sooner we two are parted—oh, only for a while!—the better for you. After what I went through, last night—no, I am not going to enter into any particulars ; I am only going to repeat, what I have said already—don't trust me. I mean it, Carmina ! Your generous nature shall not mislead you, if *I* can help it. When you are a happy married woman—when *he* is farther removed from me than he is even

now—remember your ugly, ill-tempered friend, and let me come to you. Enough of this! I have other misgivings that are waiting to be confessed. You know that old nurse of yours intimately—while I only speak from a day or two's experience of her. To my judgment, she is a woman whose fondness for you might be turned into a tigerish fondness, on very small provocation. You write to her constantly. Does she know what you have suffered? Have you told her the truth?'

‘Yes.’

‘Without reserve?’

‘Entirely without reserve.’

‘When that old woman comes to London, Carmina—and sees you, and sees Mrs. Gallilee—don't you think the consequences may be serious? and your position between them something (if you were ten times stronger than you are) that no fortitude can endure?’

Carmina started up on the sofa. She was

not able to speak. Miss Minerva gave her time to recover herself—after another look at the clock.

‘I am not alarming you for nothing,’ she proceeded; ‘I have something hopeful to propose. Your friend Teresa has energies—wild energies. Make a good use of them. She will do anything you ask of her. Take her with you to Canada!’

‘Oh, Frances!’

Miss Minerva pointed to the letter on the desk. ‘Does he tell you when he will be back?’

‘No. He feels the importance of completely restoring his health—he is going farther and farther away—he has sent to Quebec for his letters.’

‘Then there is no fear of your crossing each other on the voyage. Go to Quebec, and wait for him there.’

‘I should frighten him.’

‘Not you!’

‘What can I say to him?’

‘What you *must* say, if you are weak enough to wait for him here. Do you think his mother will consider his feelings, when he comes back to marry you? I tell you again I am not talking at random. I have thought it all out; I know how you can make your escape, and defy pursuit. You have plenty of money; you have Teresa to take care of you. Go! For your own sake, for his sake, go!’

The clock struck the hour. She rose and removed the handkerchief from her head. ‘Hush!’ she said. ‘Do I hear the rustling of a dress on the landing below?’ She snatched up a bottle of Mr. Null’s medicine—as a reason for being in the room. The sound of the rustling dress came nearer and nearer. Mrs. Gallilee (on her way to the schoolroom dinner) opened the door. She instantly understood

the purpose which the bottle was intended to answer.

‘It is *my* business to give Carmina her medicine,’ she said. ‘*Your* business is at the schoolroom table.’

She took possession of the bottle, and advanced to Carmina. There were two looking-glasses in the room. One, in the usual position, over the fireplace; the other opposite, on the wall behind the sofa. Turning back, before she left the room, Miss Minerva saw Mrs. Gallilee’s face, when she and Carmina looked at each other, reflected in the glass.

The girls were waiting for their dinner. Maria received the unpunctual governess with her ready smile, and her appropriate speech. ‘Dear Miss Minerva, we were really almost getting alarmed about you. Pardon me for noticing it, you look——’ She caught the eye of the governess, and stopped confusedly.

‘Well?’ said Miss Minerva. ‘How do I look?’

Maria still hesitated. Zo spoke out as usual. ‘You look as if somebody had frightened you.’

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AFTER two days of rain, the weather cleared again.

It was a calm, sunshiny Sunday morning. The flat country round Benjulia's house wore its brightest aspect on that clear autumn day. Even the doctor's gloomy domestic establishment reflected in some degree the change for the better. When he rose that morning, Benjulia presented himself to his household in a character which they were little accustomed to see—the character of a good-humoured master. He astonished his silent servant by attempting to whistle a tune. ‘If you ever looked cheerful in your life,’ he said to the man, ‘look cheerful now. I’m going to take a holiday!’

After working incessantly—never leaving his laboratory; eating at his dreadful table; snatching an hour's rest occasionally on the floor—he had completed a series of experiments, with results on which he could absolutely rely. He had advanced by one step nearer towards solving that occult problem in brain disease, which had thus far baffled the investigations of medical men throughout the civilised world. If his present rate of progress continued, the lapse of another month might add his name to the names that remain immortal among physicians, in the *Annals of Discovery*.

So completely had his labours absorbed his mind that he only remembered the letters which Mrs. Gallilee had left with him, when he finished his breakfast on Sunday morning. Upon examination, there appeared no allusion in Ovid's correspondence to the mysterious case of illness which he had attended at

Montreal. The one method now left, by which Benjulia could relieve the doubt that still troubled him, was to communicate directly with his friend in Canada. He decided to celebrate his holiday by taking a walk; his destination being the central telegraph office in London.

But, before he left the house, his domestic duties claimed attention. He issued his orders to the cook.

At three o'clock he would return to dinner. That day was to witness the celebration of his first regular meal for forty-eight hours past; and he expected the strictest punctuality. The cook--lately engaged--was a vigorous little woman, with fiery hair and a high colour. She, like the man-servant, felt the genial influence of her master's amiability. He looked at her, for the first time since she had entered the house. A twinkling light showed itself furtively in his dreary gray eyes: he took a

dusty old hand-screen from the sideboard, and made her a present of it! ‘There,’ he said with his dry humour, ‘don’t spoil your complexion before the kitchen fire.’ The cook possessed a sanguine temperament, and a taste to be honoured and encouraged—the taste for reading novels. She put her own romantic construction on the extraordinary compliment which the doctor’s jesting humour had paid to her. As he walked out, grimly smiling and thumping his big stick on the floor, a new idea illuminated her mind. Her master admired her; her master was no ordinary man—it might end in his marrying her.

On his way to the telegraph office, Ben-julia left Ovid’s letters at Mrs. Gallilee’s house.

If he had personally returned them, he would have found the learned lady in no very gracious humour. On the previous day she had discovered Carmina and Miss Minerva engaged in a private conference—without having

been able even to guess what the subject under discussion between them might be. They were again together that morning. Maria and Zo had gone to church with their father; Miss Minerva was kept at home by a headache. At that hour, and under those circumstances, there was no plausible pretence which would justify Mrs. Gallilee's interference. She seriously contemplated the sacrifice of a month's salary, and the dismissal of her governess without notice.

When the footman opened the door, Benjulia handed in the packet of letters. After his latest experience of Mrs. Gallilee, he had no intention of returning her visit. He walked away without uttering a word.

The cable took his message to Mr. Morpew. in these terms:—‘Ovid's patient at Montreal. Was the complaint brain disease? Yes or no.’ Having made arrangements for the forwarding of the reply from his club, he set forth on the walk back to his house.

At five minutes to three, he was at home again. As the clock struck the hour, he rang the bell. The man-servant appeared, without the dinner. Benjulia's astonishing amiability—on his holiday—was even equal to this demand on its resources.

‘I ordered roast mutton at three,’ he said, with terrifying tranquillity. ‘Where is it?’

‘The dinner will be ready in ten minutes, sir.’

‘Why is it not ready now?’

‘The cook hopes you will excuse her, sir. She is a little behindhand to-day.’

‘What has hindered her, if you please?’

The silent servant—on all other occasions the most impenetrable of human beings—began to tremble. The doctor had, literally, kicked a man out of the house who had tried to look through the laboratory skylight. He had turned away a female-servant at half an hour's notice, for forgetting to shut the door, a second

time in one day. But what were these high-handed proceedings, compared with the awful composure which, being kept waiting for dinner, only asked what had hindered the cook, and put the question politely, by saying, 'if you please'?

'Perhaps you were making love to her?' the doctor suggested, as gently as ever.

This outrageous insinuation stung the silent servant into speech. 'I'm incapable of the action, sir!' he answered indignantly; 'the woman was reading a story.'

Benjulia bent his head, as if in acknowledgment of a highly satisfactory explanation. 'Oh? reading a story?' People who read stories are said to have excitable brains. Should you call the cook excitable?'

'I should, sir! Most cooks are excitable. They say it's the kitchen fire.'

'Do they? You can go now. Don't hurry the cook—I'll wait.'

He waited, apparently following some new train of thought which highly diverted him. Ten minutes passed—then a quarter of an hour—then another five minutes. When the servant returned with the dinner, the master's private reflections continued to amuse him: his thin lips were still widening grimly, distended by his formidable smile.

On being carved, the mutton proved to be underdone. At other times, this was an unpardonable crime in Benjulia's domestic code of laws. All he said now was, 'Take it away.' He dined on potatoes, and bread and cheese. When he had done, he was rather more amiable than ever. He said, 'Ask the cook to come and see me!'

The cook presented herself, with one hand on her palpitating heart, and the other holding her handkerchief to her eyes.

'What are you crying about?' Benjulia inquired; 'I haven't scolded you, have I?'

The cook began an apology ; the doctor pointed to a chair. ‘Sit down, and recover yourself.’ The cook sat down, faintly smiling through her tears. This otherwise incomprehensible reception of a person who had kept the dinner waiting twenty minutes, and who had not done the mutton properly even then (taken in connection with the master’s complimentary inquiries, reported downstairs by the footman), could bear but one interpretation. It wasn’t every woman who had her beautiful hair, and her rosy complexion. Why had she not thought of going upstairs first, just to see whether she looked her best in the glass ? Would he begin by making a confession ? or would he begin by kissing her ?

He began by lighting his pipe. For a while he smoked placidly with his eye on the cook. ‘I hear you have been reading a story,’ he resumed. ‘What is the name of it ?’

‘“ Pamela ; or Virtue Rewarded,” sir.’

Benjulia went on with his smoking. The cook, thus far demure and downcast, lifted her eyes experimentally. He was still looking at her. Did he want encouragement? The cook cautiously offered a little literary information.

‘The author’s name is on the book, sir. Name of Richardson.’

The information was graciously received, ‘Yes; I’ve heard of the name, and heard of the book. Is it interesting?’

‘Oh, sir, it’s a beautiful story! My only excuse for being late with the dinner——’

‘Who’s Pamela?’

‘A young person in service, sir. I’m sure I wish I was more like her! I felt quite broken-hearted when you sent the mutton down again; and you so kind as to overlook an error in the roasting——’

Benjulia stopped the apology once more. He pursued his own ends with a penitent cook,

just as he pursued his own ends with a vivisected animal. Nothing moved him out of his appointed course, in the one case or in the other. He returned to Pamela.

‘And what becomes of her at the end of the story?’ he asked.

The cook simpered. ‘It’s Pamela who is the virtuous young person, sir. And so the story comes true—Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded.’

‘Who rewards her?’

Was there ever anything so lucky as this? Pamela’s situation was fast becoming the cook’s situation. The bosom of the vigorous little woman began to show signs of tender agitation—distributed over a large surface. She rolled her eyes amorously. Benjulia puffed out another mouthful of smoke. ‘Well,’ he repeated, ‘who rewards Pamela?’

‘Her master, sir.’

‘What does he do?’

The cook’s eyes sank modestly to her lap

The cook's complexion became brighter than ever.

‘Her master marries her, sir.’

‘Oh?’

That was all he said. He was not astonished, or confused, or encouraged—he simply intimated that he now knew how Pamela's master had rewarded Pamela. And, more dispiriting still, he took the opportunity of knocking the ashes out of his pipe, and filled it, and lit it again. If the cook had been one of the few miserable wretches who never read novels, she might have felt her fondly founded hopes already sinking from under her. As it was, Richardson sustained her faith in herself; Richardson reminded her that Pamela's master had hesitated, and that Pamela's Virtue had not earned its reward on easy terms. She stole another look at the doctor. The eloquence of women's eyes, so widely and justly celebrated in poetry and

prose, now spoke in the cook's eyes. They said, 'Marry me, dear sir, and you shall never have underdone mutton again.' The hearts of other savages have been known to soften under sufficient influences—why should the scientific savage, under similar pressure, not melt a little too? The doctor took up the talk again: he made a kind allusion to the cook's family circumstances.

'When you first came here, I think you told me you had no relations?'

'I am an orphan, sir.'

'And you had been some time out of a situation, when I engaged you?'

'Yes, sir; my poor little savings were nearly at an end!' Could he resist that pathetic picture of the orphan's little savings—framed, as it were, in a delicately-designed reference to her fellow-servant in the story? 'I was as poor as Pamela,' she suggested softly.

'And as virtuous,' Benjulia added.

The cook's eloquent eyes said, 'Thank you, sir.'

He laid down his pipe. That was a good sign, surely? He drew his chair nearer to her. Better and better! His arm was long enough, in the new position, to reach her waist. Her waist was ready for him.

'You have nothing particular to do, this afternoon; and I have nothing particular to do.' He delivered himself of this assertion rather abruptly. At the same time, it was one of those promising statements which pave the way for anything. He might say, 'Having nothing particular to do to-day—why shouldn't we make love?' Or he might say, 'Having nothing particular to do to-morrow—why shouldn't we get the marriage license?' Would he put it in that way? No: he made a proposal of quite another kind. He said, 'You seem to be fond of stories. Suppose I tell you a story?'

Perhaps, there was some hidden meaning in this. There was unquestionably a sudden alteration in his look and manner; the cook asked herself what it meant.

If she had seen the doctor at his secret work in the laboratory, the change in him might have put her on her guard. He was now looking (experimentally) at the inferior creature seated before him in the chair, as he looked (experimentally) at the other inferior creatures stretched under him on the table.

His story began in the innocent, old-fashioned way.

‘Once upon a time, there was a master and there was a maid. We will call the master by the first letter of the alphabet—Mr. A. And we will call the maid by the second letter—Miss B.’

The cook drew a long breath of relief. There *was* a hidden meaning in the doctor’s

story. The unfortunate woman thought to herself, 'I have not only got fine hair and a beautiful complexion; I am clever as well!' On her rare evenings of liberty, she sometimes gratified another highly creditable taste, besides the taste for reading novels. She was an eager play-goer. That notable figure in the drama—the man who tells his own story, under pretence of telling the story of another person—was no unfamiliar figure in her stage experience. Her encouraging smile made its modest appearance once more. In the very beginning of her master's story, she saw already the happy end.

'We all of us have our troubles in life,' Benjulia went on; 'and Miss B. had her troubles. For a long time, she was out of a situation; and she had no kind parents to help her. Miss B. was an orphan. Her little savings were almost gone.'

It was too distressing. The cook took out

her handkerchief, and pitied Miss B. with all her heart.

The doctor proceeded.

‘But virtue, as we know when we read “Pamela,” is sure of its reward. Circumstances occurred in the household of Mr. A. which made it necessary for him to engage a cook. He discovered an advertisement in a newspaper, which informed him that Miss B. was in search of a situation. Mr. A. found her to be a young and charming woman. Mr. A. engaged her.’ At that critical part of the story, Benjulia paused. ‘And what did Mr. A. do next?’ he asked.

The cook could restrain herself no longer. She jumped out of her chair, and threw her arms round the doctor’s neck.

Benjulia went on with his story as if nothing had happened.

‘And what did Mr. A. do next?’ he repeated. ‘He put his hand in his pocket—he

gave Miss B. a month's wages—and he turned her out of the house. You impudent hussy, you have delayed my dinner, spoilt my mutton, and hugged me round the neck! There is your money. Go.'

With glaring eyes and gaping mouth, the cook stood looking at him, like a woman struck to stone. In a moment more, the rage burst out of her in a furious scream. She turned to the table, and snatched up a knife. Benjulia wrenched it out of her hand, and dropped back into his chair completely overpowered by the success of his little joke. He did what he had never done within the memory of his oldest friend—he burst out laughing. 'This *has* been a holiday!' he said. 'Why haven't I got somebody with me to enjoy it?'

At that laugh, at those words, the cook's fury in its fiercest heat became frozen by terror. There was something superhuman in

the doctor's diabolical joy. Even *he* felt the wild horror in the woman's eyes as they rested on him.

‘What's the matter with you?’ he asked. She muttered and mumbled—and, shrinking away from him, crept towards the door. As she approached the window, a man outside passed by it on his way to the house. She pointed to him; and repeated Benjulia's own words:

‘Somebody to enjoy it with you,’ she said.

She opened the dining-room door. The man-servant appeared in the hall, with a gentleman behind him.

The gentleman was a scrupulously polite person. He looked with alarm at the ghastly face of the cook as she ran past him, making for the kitchen stairs. ‘I'm afraid I intrude on you at an unfortunate time,’ he said to Benjulia. ‘Pray excuse me; I will call again.’

‘Come in, sir.’ The doctor spoke absently,

looking towards the hall, and thinking of something else.

The gentleman entered the room.

‘My name is Mool,’ he said. ‘I have had the honour of meeting you at one of Mrs. Gallilee’s parties.’

‘Very likely. I don’t remember it myself. Take a seat.’

He was still thinking of something else. Modest Mr. Mool took a seat in confusion. The doctor crossed the room, and opened the door.

‘Excuse me for a minute,’ he said. ‘I will be back directly.’

He went to the top of the kitchen stairs, and called to the housemaid. ‘Is the cook down there?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘What is she doing?’

‘Crying her heart out.’

Benjulia turned away again with the air of a disappointed man. A violent moral shock

sometimes has a serious effect on the brain—especially when it is the brain of an excitable woman. Always a physiologist, even in those rare moments when he was amusing himself, it had just struck Benjulia that the cook—after her outbreak of fury—might be a case worth studying. But, she had got relief in crying; her brain was safe; she had ceased to interest him. He returned to the dining-room.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

‘You look hot, sir; have a drink. Old English ale, out of the barrel.’

The tone was hearty. He poured out the sparkling ale into a big tumbler, with hospitable good-will. Mr. Mool was completely, and most agreeably, taken by surprise. He too was feeling the influence of the doctor’s good humour—enriched in quality by pleasant remembrances of his interview with the cook.

‘I live in the suburbs, Doctor Benjulia, on this side of London,’ Mr. Mool explained; ‘and I have had a nice walk from my house to yours. If I have done wrong, sir, in visiting you on Sunday, I can only plead that I am engaged in business during the week——’

‘All right. One day’s the same as another, provided you don’t interrupt me. You don’t interrupt me now. Do you smoke?’

‘No, thank you.’

‘Do you mind my smoking?’

‘I like it, doctor.’

‘Very amiable on your part, I’m sure. What did you say your name was?’

‘Mool.’

Benjulia looked at him suspiciously. Was he a physiologist, and a rival? ‘You’re not a doctor—are you?’ he said.

‘I am a lawyer.’

One of the few popular prejudices which Benjulia shared with his inferior fellow-creatures was the prejudice against lawyers. But for his angry recollection of the provocation successfully offered to him by his despicable brother, Mrs. Gallilee would never have found her way into his confidence. But for his hearty enjoyment of the mystification of the cook, Mr. Mool

would have been requested to state the object of his visit in writing, and would have gone home again a baffled man. The doctor's holiday amiability had reached its full development indeed, when he allowed a strange lawyer to sit and talk with him !

‘Gentlemen of your profession,’ he muttered, ‘never pay visits to people whom they don’t know, without having their own interests in view. Mr. Mool, you want something of me. What is it?’

Mr. Mool’s professional tact warned him to waste no time on prefatory phrases.

‘I venture on my present intrusion,’ he began, ‘in consequence of a statement recently made to me, in my office, by Mrs. Gallilee.’

‘Stop!’ cried Benjulia. ‘I don’t like your beginning, I can tell you. Is it necessary to mention the name of that old ——?’ He used a word, described in dictionaries as having a twofold meaning. (First, ‘A female of the

canine kind.' Second, 'A term of reproach for a woman.') It shocked Mr. Mool; and it is therefore unfit to be reported.

'Really, Doctor Benjulia!'

'Does that mean that you positively must talk about her?'

Mr. Mool smiled. 'Let us say that it may bear that meaning,' he answered.

'Go on, then—and get it over. She made a statement in your office. Out with it, my good fellow. Has it anything to do with me?'

'I should not otherwise, Doctor Benjulia, have ventured to present myself at your house.' With that necessary explanation, Mr. Mool related all that had passed between Mrs. Gallilee and himself.

At the outset of the narrative, Benjulia angrily laid aside his pipe, on the point of interrupting the lawyer. He changed his mind; and, putting a strong constraint on himself, listened in silence. 'I hope, sir,' Mr. Mool

concluded, ‘you will not take a hard view of my motive. It is only the truth to say that I am interested in Miss Carmina’s welfare. I felt the sincerest respect and affection for her parents. You knew them too. They were good people. On reflection you must surely regret it, if you have carelessly repeated a false report? Won’t you help me to clear the poor mother’s memory of this horrid stain?’

Benjulia smoked in silence. Had that simple and touching appeal found its way to him? He began very strangely, when he consented at last to open his lips.

‘You’re what they call, a middle-aged man,’ he said. ‘I suppose you have had some experience of women?’

Mr. Mool blushed. ‘I am a married man, sir,’ he replied gravely.

‘Very well; that’s experience—of one kind. When a man’s out of temper, and a woman wants something of him, do you know how

cleverly she can take advantage of her privileges to aggravate him, till there's nothing he won't do to get her to leave him in peace? That's how I came to tell Mrs. Gallilee, what she told you.'

He waited a little, and comforted himself with his pipe.

'Mind this,' he resumed, 'I don't profess to feel any interest in the girl; and I never cared two straws about her parents. At the same time, if you can turn to good account what I am going to say next—do it, and welcome. This scandal began in the bragging of a fellow-student of mine at Rome. He was angry with me, and angry with another man, for laughing at him when he declared himself to be Mrs. Robert Graywell's lover: and he laid us a wager that we should see the woman alone in his room, that night. We were hidden behind a curtain, and we did see her in his room. I paid the money I had lost, and left Rome

soon afterwards. The other man refused to pay.'

'On what ground?' Mr. Mool eagerly asked.

'On the ground that she wore a thick veil, and never showed her face.'

'An unanswerable objection, Doctor Ben-julia!'

'Perhaps it might be. I didn't think so myself. Two hours before, Mrs. Robert Graywell and I had met in the street. She had on a dress of a remarkable colour in those days—a sort of sea-green. And a bonnet to match, which everybody stared at, because it was not half the size of the big bonnets then in fashion. There was no mistaking the strange dress or the tall figure, when I saw her again in the student's room. So I paid the bet.'

'Do you remember the name of the man who refused to pay?'

'His name was Egisto Baccani.'

‘Have you heard anything of him since?’

‘Yes. He got into some political scrape, and took refuge, like the rest of them, in England; and got his living, like the rest of them, by teaching languages. He sent me his prospectus—that’s how I came to know about it.’

‘Have you got the prospectus?’

‘Torn up, long ago.’

Mr. Mool wrote down the name in his pocket-book. ‘There is nothing more you can tell me?’ he said.

‘Nothing.’

‘Accept my best thanks, doctor. Good-day!’

‘If you find Baccani let me know. Another drop of ale? Are you likely to see Mrs. Gallilee soon?’

‘Yes—if I find Baccani.’

‘Do you ever play with children?’

‘I have five of my own to play with,’ Mr. Mool answered.

‘Very well. Ask for the youngest child when you go to Mrs. Gallilee’s. We call her Zo. Put your finger on her spine—here, just below the neck. Press on the place—so. And, when she wriggles, say, With the big doctor’s love.’

Getting back to his own house, Mr. Mool was surprised to find an open carriage at the garden gate. A smartly-dressed woman, on the front seat, surveyed him with an uneasy look. ‘If you please, sir,’ she said, ‘would you kindly tell Miss Carmina that we really mustn’t wait any longer?’

The woman’s uneasiness was reflected in Mr. Mool’s face. A visit from Carmina, at his private residence, could have no ordinary motive. The fear instantly occurred to him that Mrs. Gallilee might have spoken to her of her mother.

Before he opened the drawing-room door,

this alarm passed away. He heard Carmina talking with his wife and daughters.

‘May I say one little word to you, Mr. Mool?’

He took her into his study. She was shy and confused, but certainly neither angry nor distressed.

‘My aunt sends me out every day, when it’s fine, for a drive,’ she said. ‘As the carriage passed close by, I thought I might ask you a question.’

‘Certainly, my dear! As many questions as you please.’

‘It’s about the law. My aunt says she has the authority over me now, which my dear father had while he was living. Is that true?’

‘Quite true.’

‘For how long is she my guardian?’

‘Until you are twenty-one years old.’

The faint colour faded from Carmina’s face.

‘More than three years perhaps to suffer!’ she said sadly.

‘To suffer? What do you mean, my dear?’

She turned paler still, and made no reply.

‘I want to ask one thing more?’ she resumed, in sinking tones. ‘Would my aunt still be my guardian—supposing I was married?’

Mr. Mool answered this, with his eyes fixed on her in grave scrutiny.

‘In that case, your husband is the only person who has any authority over you. These are rather strange questions, Carmina. Won’t you take me into your confidence?’

In sudden agitation she seized his hand and kissed it. ‘I must go!’ she said. ‘I have kept the carriage waiting too long already.’

She ran out, without once looking back.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MRS. GALLILEE'S maid looked at her watch, when the carriage left Mr. Mool's house. 'We shall be nearly an hour late, before we get home,' she said.

'It's my fault, Marceline. Tell your mistress the truth, if she questions you. I shall not think the worse of you for obeying your orders.'

'I'd rather lose my place, Miss, than get you into trouble.'

The woman spoke truly. Carmina's sweet temper had made her position not only endurable, but delightful: she had been treated like a companion and a friend. But for that circumstance—so keenly had Marceline felt

the degradation of being employed as a spy —she would undoubtedly have quitted Mrs. Gallilee's service.

On the way home, instead of talking pleasantly as usual, Carmina was silent and sad. Had this change in her spirits been caused by the visit to Mr. Mool? It was even so. The lawyer had innocently decided her on taking the desperate course which Miss Minerva had proposed.

If Mrs. Gallilee's assertion of her absolute right of authority, as guardian, had been declared by Mr. Mool to be incorrect, Carmina (hopefully forgetful of her aunt's temper) had thought of a compromise.

She would have consented to remain at Mrs. Gallilee's disposal until Ovid returned, on condition of being allowed, when Teresa arrived in London, to live in retirement with her old nurse. This change of abode would prevent any collision between Mrs. Gallilee

and Teresa, and would make Carmina's life as peaceful, and even as happy, as she could wish.

But now that the lawyer had confirmed her aunt's statement of the position in which they stood towards one another, instant flight to Ovid's love and protection seemed to be the one choice left—unless Carmina could resign herself to a life of merciless persecution and perpetual suspense.

The arrangements for the flight were already complete.

That momentary view of Mrs. Gallilee's face, reflected in the glass, had confirmed Miss Minerva's resolution to interfere. Closeted with Carmina on the Sunday morning, she had proposed a scheme of escape, which would even set Mrs. Gallilee's vigilance and cunning at defiance. No pecuniary obstacle stood in the way. The first quarterly payment of Carmina's allowance of five hundred a year had been

already made, by Mr. Mool's advice. Enough was left—even without the assistance which the nurse's resources would render—to purchase the necessary outfit, and to take the two women to Quebec. On the day after Teresa's arrival (at an hour of the morning while the servants were still in bed) Carmina and her companion could escape from the house on foot—and not leave a trace behind them.

Meanwhile, Fortune befriended Mrs. Gallilee's maid. No questions were put to her ; no notice even was taken of the late return.

Five minutes before the carriage drew up at the house, a learned female friend from the country called, by appointment, on Mrs. Gallilee. On the coming Tuesday afternoon, an event of the deepest scientific interest was to take place. A new Professor had undertaken to deliver himself, by means of a lecture, of subversive opinions on 'Matter.' A general discussion was to follow ; and in that discussion

(upon certain conditions) Mrs. Gallilee herself proposed to take part.

‘If the Professor attempts to account for the mutual action of separate atoms,’ she said, ‘I defy him to do it, without assuming the existence of a continuous material medium in space. And this point of view being accepted—follow me here!—what is the result? In plain words,’ cried Mrs. Gallilee, rising excitedly to her feet, ‘we dispense with the idea of atoms!’

The friend looked infinitely relieved by the prospect of dispensing with atoms.

‘Now observe!’ Mrs. Gallilee proceeded. ‘In connection with this part of the subject, I shall wait to see if the Professor adopts Thomson’s theory. You are acquainted with Thomson’s theory? No? Let me put it briefly. Mere heterogeneity, together with gravitation, is sufficient to explain all the

apparently discordant laws of molecular action. You understand? Very well. If the Professor passes over Thomson, *then*, I rise in the body of the Hall, and take my stand—follow me again!—on these grounds.'

While Mrs. Gallilee's grounds were being laid out for the benefit of her friend, the coachman took the carriage back to the stables; the maid went downstairs to tea; and Carmina joined Miss Minerva in the schoolroom—all three being protected from discovery, by Mrs. Gallilee's rehearsal of her performance in the Comedy of Atoms.

The Monday morning brought with it news from Rome—serious news which confirmed Miss Minerva's misgivings.

Carmina received a letter, bearing the Italian postmark, but not addressed to her in Teresa's handwriting. She looked to the signa-

ture before she began to read. Her correspondent was the old priest—Father Patrizio. He wrote in these words :

‘ My dear child,—Our good Teresa leaves us to-day, on her journey to London. She has impatiently submitted to the legal ceremonies, rendered necessary by her husband having died without making a will. He hardly left anything in the way of money, after payment of his burial expenses, and his few little debts. What is of far greater importance—he lived, and died, a good Christian. I was with him in his last moments. Offer your prayers, my dear, for the repose of his soul.

‘ Teresa left me, declaring her purpose of travelling night and day, so as to reach you the sooner.

‘ In her headlong haste, she has not even waited to look over her husband’s papers ; but has taken the case containing them to England—to be examined at leisure, in your beloved

company. Strong as this good creature is, I believe she will be obliged to rest on the road for a night at least. Calculating on this, I assume that my letter will get to you first. I have something to say about your old nurse, which it is well that you should know.

‘Do not for a moment suppose that I blame you for having told Teresa of the unfriendly reception, which you appear to have met with from your aunt and guardian. Who should you confide in—if not in the excellent woman who has filled the place of a mother to you? Besides, from your earliest years, have I not always instilled into you the reverence of truth? You have told the truth in your letters. My child, I commend you, and feel for you.

‘But the impression produced on Teresa is not what you or I could wish. It is one of her merits, that she loves you with the truest devotion ; it is one of her defects, that she is

fierce and obstinate in resentment. Your aunt has become an object of absolute hatred to her. I have combated—successfully, as I hope and believe—this unchristian state of feeling.

‘She is now beyond the reach of my influence. My purpose in writing is to beg you to continue the good work that I have begun. Compose this impetuous nature ; restrain this fiery spirit. Your gentle influence, Carmina, has a power of its own over those who love you—and who loves you like Teresa?—of which perhaps you are not yourself aware. Use your power discreetly ; and, with the blessing of God and his Saints, I have no fear of the result.

‘Write to me, my child, when Teresa arrives—and let me hear that you are happier, and better in health. Tell me also, whether there is any speedy prospect of your marriage. If I may presume to judge from the little I know,

your dearest earthly interests depend on the removal of obstacles to this salutary change in your life. I send you my good wishes, and my blessing. If a poor old priest like me can be of any service, do not forget

‘FATHER PATRIZIO.’

Any lingering hesitation that Carmina might still have felt, was at an end when she read this letter. Good Father Patrizio, like good Mr. Mool, had innocently urged her to set her guardian’s authority at defiance.

CHAPTER XL.

WHEN the morning lessons were over, Carmina showed the priest's letter to Miss Minerva. The governess read it, and handed it back in silence.

‘Have you nothing to say?’ Carmina asked.

‘Nothing. You know my opinion already. That letter says what I have said—with greater authority.’

‘It has determined me to follow your advice, Frances.’

‘Then it has done well.’

‘And you see,’ Carmina continued, ‘that Father Patrizio speaks of obstacles in the way of my marriage. Teresa has evidently shown

him my letters. Do you think he fears, as I do, that my aunt may find some means of separating us, even when Ovid comes back ? ’

‘ Very likely.’

She spoke in faint weary tones—listlessly leaning back in her chair. Carmina asked if she had passed another sleepless night.

‘ Yes,’ she said, ‘ another bad night, and the usual martyrdom in teaching the children. I don’t know which disgusts me most—Zoe’s impudent stupidity, or Maria’s unendurable humbug.’

She had never yet spoken of Maria in this way. Even her voice seemed to be changed. Instead of betraying the usual angry abruptness, her tones coldly indicated impenetrable contempt. In the silence that ensued, she looked up, and saw Carmina’s eyes resting on her anxiously and kindly.

‘ Any other human being but you,’ she said, ‘ would find me disagreeable and rude—

and would be quite right, too. I haven't asked after your health. You look paler than usual. Have *you*, too, had a bad night?'

'I fell asleep towards the morning. And—oh, I had such a delightful dream! I could almost wish that I had never awakened from it.'

'Who did you dream of?' She put the question mechanically—frowning, as if at some repellent thought suggested to her by what she had just heard.

'I dreamed of my mother,' Carmina answered.

Miss Minerva raised herself at once in the chair. Whatever that passing impression might have been, she was free from it now. There was some little life again in her eyes; some little spirit in her voice. 'Take me out of myself,' she said; 'tell me your dream.'

'It is nothing very remarkable, Frances. We all of us sometimes see our dear lost ones

in sleep. I saw my mother again, as I used to see her in the nursery at bedtime—tall and beautiful, with her long dark hair falling over her white dressing-gown to the waist. She stooped over me, and kissed me ; and she looked surprised. She said, “ My little angel, why are you here in a strange house ? I have come to take you back to your own cot, by my bedside.” I wasn’t surprised or frightened ; I put my arms round her neck ; and we floated away together through the cool starry night ; and we were at home again. I saw my cot, with its pretty white curtains and pink ribbons. I heard my mother tell me an English fairy story, out of a book which my father had given to her—and her kind voice grew fainter and fainter, while I grew more and more sleepy—and it ended softly, just as it used to end in the happy old days. And I woke, crying. Do *you* ever dream of your mother now ? ’

‘ I ? God forbid ! ’

‘ Oh, Frances, what a dreadful thing to say ! ’

‘ Is it ? It was the thought in me, when you spoke. And with good reason, too. I was the last of a large family—the ugly one ; the ill-tempered one ; the encumbrance that made it harder than ever to find money enough to pay the household expenses. My father swore at my mother for *being* my mother. She reviled him just as bitterly in return ; and vented the rest of her ill-temper on my wretched little body, with no sparing hand. Bedtime was her time for beating me. Talk of your mother—not of mine ! You were very young, were you not, when she died ? ’

‘ Too young to feel my misfortune—but old enough to remember the sweetest woman that ever lived. Let me show you my father’s portrait of her again. Doesn’t that face tell you what an angel she was ? There was some charm in her that all children felt. I can just remember some of my playfellows who used to

come to our garden. Other good mothers were with us—but the children all crowded round *my* mother. They would have her in all their games; they fought for places on her lap when she told them stories; some of them cried, and some of them screamed, when it was time to take them away from her. Oh, why do we live! why do we die! I have bitter thoughts sometimes, Frances, like you. I have read in poetry that death is a fearful thing. To me, death is a cruel thing,—and it has never seemed so cruel as in these later days, since I have known Ovid. If my mother had but lived till now, what happiness would have been added to my life and to hers! How Ovid would have loved her—how she would have loved Ovid!’

Miss Minerva listened in silence. It was the silence of true interest and sympathy, while Carmina was speaking of her mother. When her lover’s name became mingled with the remembrances of her childhood—the change

came. Once more, the tell-tale lines began to harden in the governess's face. She lay back again in her chair. Her fingers irritably platted and unplatted the edge of her black apron.

Carmina was too deeply absorbed in her thoughts, too eagerly bent on giving them expression, to notice these warning signs.

‘I have all my mother's letters to my father,’ she went on, ‘when he was away from her on his sketching excursions. You have still a little time to spare—I should so like to read some of them to you. I was reading one, last night—which perhaps accounts for my dream? It is on a subject that interests everybody. In my father's absence, a very dear friend of his met with a misfortune; and my mother had to prepare his wife to hear the bad news—oh, that reminds me! There is something I want to say to you first.’

‘About yourself?’ Miss Minerva asked.

‘About Ovid. I want your advice.’

Miss Minerva was silent. Carmina went on. 'It's about writing to Ovid,' she explained.

'Write, of course!'

The reply was suddenly and sharply given. 'Surely, I have not offended you?' Carmina said.

'Nonsense! Let me hear your mother's letter.'

'Yes—but I want you to hear the circumstances first.'

'You have mentioned them already.'

'No! no! I mean the circumstances, in my case.' She drew her chair closer to Miss Minerva. 'I want to whisper—for fear of somebody passing on the stairs. The more I think of it, the more I feel that I ought to prepare Ovid for seeing me, before I make my escape. You said when we talked of it——'

'Never mind what I said.'

'Oh, but I do mind! You said I could go to Ovid's bankers at Quebec, and then

write when I knew where he was. I have been thinking over it since—and I see a serious risk. He might return from his inland journey, on the very day that I get there; he might even meet me in the street. In his delicate health—I daren't think of what the consequences of such a surprise might be! And then there is the dreadful necessity of telling him, that his mother has driven me into taking this desperate step. In my place, wouldn't you feel that you could do it more delicately in writing?'

'I dare say!'

'I might write to-morrow, for instance. To-morrow is one of the American mail days. My letter would get to Canada (remembering the roundabout way by which Teresa and I are to travel, for fear of discovery), days and days before we could arrive. I should shut myself up in an hotel at Quebec; and Teresa could go every day to the bank, to hear if Ovid

was likely to send for his letters, or likely to call soon and ask for them. Then he would be prepared. Then, when we meet——!’

The governess left her chair, and pointed to the clock.

Carmina looked at her—and rose in alarm.

‘Are you in pain?’ she asked.

‘Yes—neuralgia, I think. I have the remedy in my room. Don’t keep me, my dear. Mrs. Gallilee mustn’t find me here again.’

The paroxysm of pain which Carmina had noticed, passed over her face once more. She subdued it, and left the room. The pain mastered her again; a low cry broke from her when she closed the door. Carmina ran out: ‘Frances! what is it?’ Frances looked over her shoulder, while she slowly ascended the stairs. ‘Never mind!’ she said gently. ‘I have got my remedy.’

Carmina advanced a step to follow her, and drew back.

Was that expression of suffering really caused by pain of the body? or was it attributable to anything that she had rashly said? She tried to recall what had passed between Frances and herself. The effort wearied her. Her thoughts turned self-reproachfully to Ovid. If *he* had been speaking to a friend whose secret sorrow was known to him, would he have mentioned the name of the woman whom they both loved? She looked at his portrait, and reviled herself as a selfish insensible wretch. ‘Will Ovid improve me?’ she wondered. ‘Shall I be a little worthier of him, when I am his wife?’

Luncheon time came; and Mrs. Gallilee sent word that they were not to wait for her.

‘She’s studying,’ said Mr. Gallilee, with awe-struck looks. ‘She’s going to make a speech at the Discussion to-morrow. The man who gives the lecture is the man she’s going to

pitch into. I don't know him ; but—how do you feel about it yourself, Carmina?—I wouldn't stand in his shoes for any sum of money you could offer me. Poor devil ! I beg your pardon, my dear ; let me give you a wing of the fowl. Boiled fowl—ch ? and tongue—ha ? Do you know the story of the foreigner ? He dined out fifteen times with his English friends. And there was boiled fowl and tongue at every dinner. The fifteenth time, the foreigner couldn't stand it any longer. He slapped his forehead, and he said, “ Ah, merciful Heaven, cock and bacon again ! ” You won't mention it, will you ?—and perhaps you think as I do ?—I'm sick of cock and bacon, myself.'

Mr. Null's medical orders still prescribed fresh air. The carriage came to the door at the regular hour ; and Mr. Gallilee, with equal regularity, withdrew to his club.

Carmina was too uneasy to leave the house,

without seeing Miss Minerva first. She went up to the schoolroom.

There was no sound of voices, when she opened the door. Miss Minerva was writing, and silence had been proclaimed. The girls were ready dressed for their walk. Industrious Maria had her book. Idle Zo, perched on a high chair, sat kicking her legs. ‘If you say a word,’ she whispered, as Carmina passed her, ‘you’ll be called an Imp, and stuck up on a chair. I shall go to the boy.’

‘Are you better, Frances?’

‘Much better, my dear.’

Her face denied it; the look of suffering was there still. She tore up the letter which she had been writing, and threw the fragments into the waste-paper basket.

‘That’s the second letter you’ve torn up,’ Zo remarked.

‘Say a word more—and you shall have bread and water for tea!’ Miss Minerva was

not free from irritation, although she might be free from pain. Even Zo noticed how angry the governess was.

‘I wish you could drive with me in the carriage,’ said Carmina. ‘The air would do you so much good.’

‘Impossible ! But you may soothe my irritable nerves in another way, if you like.’

‘How?’

‘Relieve me of these girls. Take them out with you. Do you mind?’

Zo instantly jumped off her chair ; and even Maria looked up from her book.

‘I will take them with pleasure. Must we ask my aunt’s permission?’

‘We will dispense with your aunt’s permission. She is shut up in her study—and we are all forbidden to disturb her. I will take it on myself.’ She turned to the girls with another outbreak of irritability. ‘Be off!’

Maria rose with dignity, and made one of

her successful exits. 'I am sorry, dear Miss Minerva, if *I* have done anything to make you angry.' She pointed the emphasis on 'I,' by a side-look at her sister. Zo bounced out of the room, and performed the Italian boy's dance on the landing. 'For shame!' said Maria. Zo burst into singing. '*Yah yah-yah-bellah-vitah-yah!* Jolly! jolly jolly!—we are going out for a drive!'

Carmina waited, to say a friendly word, before she followed the girls.

'You didn't think me neglectful, Frances, when I let you go upstairs by yourself!'

Miss Minerva answered sadly and kindly. 'The best thing you could do was to leave me by myself.'

Carmina's mind was still not quite at ease.

'Yes—but you were in pain,' she said.

'You curious child! I am not in pain now.'

'Will you make me comfortable, Frances? Give me a kiss.'

‘Two, my dear—if you like.’

She kissed Carmina on one cheek and on the other. ‘Now leave me to write,’ she said.

Carmina left her.

The drive ought to have been a pleasant one, with Zo in the carriage. To Marceline, it was a time of the heartiest enjoyment. Maria herself condescended to smile, now and then. There was only one dull person among them. ‘Miss Carmina was but poor company,’ the maid remarked when they got back.

Mrs. Gallilee herself received them in the hall.

‘You will never take the children out again without my leave,’ she said to Carmina. ‘The person who is really responsible for what you have done, will mislead you no more.’ With those words she entered the library, and closed the door.

Maria and Zo, at the sight of their mother, had taken to flight. Carmina stood alone in

the hall. Mrs. Gallilee had turned her cold. After awhile, she followed the children as far as her own room. There, her resolution failed her. She called faintly upstairs—‘Frances!’ There was no answering voice. She went into her room. A small paper packet was on the table; sealed, and addressed to herself. She tore it open. A ring with a spinel ruby in it dropped out: she recognised the stone—it was Miss Minerva’s ring.

Some blotted lines were traced on the paper inside.

‘I have tried to pour out my heart to you in writing—and I have torn up the letters. The fewest words are the best. Look back at my confession—and you will know why I have left you. You shall hear from me, when I am more worthy of you than I am now. In the meantime, wear my ring. It will tell you how mean I once was. F. M.’

Carmina looked at the ring. She remem-

bered that Frances had tried to make her accept it as security, in return for the loan of thirty pounds.

She referred to the confession. Two passages in it were underlined : ‘The wickedness in me, on which Mrs. Gallilee calculated, may be in me still.’ And, again : ‘Even now, when you have found me out, I love him. Don’t trust me.’

Never had Carmina trusted her more faithfully than at that bitter moment !

CHAPTER XLI.

THE ordinary aspect of the schoolroom was seen no more.

Installed in a position of temporary authority, the parlour-maid sat silently at her needlework. Maria stood by the window, in the new character of an idle girl—with her handkerchief in her hand, and her everlasting book dropped unnoticed on the floor. Zo lay flat on her back, on the hearth-rug, hugging the dog in her arms. At intervals, she rolled herself over slowly from side to side, and stared at the ceiling with wondering eyes. Miss Minerva's departure had struck the parlour-maid dumb, and had demoralized the pupils.

Maria broke the silence at last. ‘I wonder where Carmina is?’ she said.

‘In her room, most likely,’ the parlour-maid suggested.

‘Had I better go and see after her?’

The cautious parlour-maid declined to offer advice. Maria’s well-balanced mind was so completely unhinged, that she looked with languid curiosity at her sister. Zo still stared at the ceiling, and still rolled slowly from one side to the other. The dog on her breast, lulled by the regular motion, slept profoundly—not even troubled by a dream of fleas!

While Maria was still considering what it might be best to do, Carmina entered the room. She looked, as the servant afterwards described it, ‘like a person who had lost her way.’ Maria exhibited the feeling of the schoolroom, by raising her handkerchief in solemn silence to her eyes. Without taking notice of this demonstration, Carmina approached the parlour-

maid, and said, 'Did you see Miss Minerva before she went away?'

'I took her message, Miss.'

'What message?'

'The message, saying she wished to see my mistress for a few minutes.'

'Well?'

'Well, Miss, I was told to show the governess into the library. She went down with her bonnet on, ready dressed to go out. Before she had been five minutes with my mistress she came out again, and rang the hall-bell, and spoke to Joseph. "My boxes are packed and directed," she says; "I will send for them in an hour's time. Good day, Joseph." And she stepped into the street, as quietly as if she was going out shopping round the corner.'

'Have the boxes been sent for?'

'Yes, Miss.'

Carmina lifted her head, and spoke in steadier tones.

‘Where have they been taken to?’

‘To the flower-shop at the back—to be kept till called for.’

‘No other address?’

‘None.’

The last faint hope of tracing Frances was at an end. Carmina turned wearily to leave the room. Zo called to her from the hearth-rug. Always kind to the child, she retraced her steps. ‘What is it?’ she asked.

Zo got on her legs before she spoke, like a member of parliament. ‘I’ve been thinking about that governess,’ she announced. ‘Didn’t I once tell you I was going to run away? And wasn’t it because of Her? Hush! Here’s the part of it I can’t make out—She’s run away from Me. I don’t bear malice; I’m only glad in myself. No more ‘dirty nails. No more bread and water for tea. That’s all. Good morning.’ Zo laid herself down again on the

rug ; and the dog laid himself down again on Zo.

Carmina returned to her room—to reflect on what she had heard from the parlour-maid.

It was now plain that Mrs. Gallilee had not been allowed the opportunity of dismissing her governess at a moment's notice : Miss Minerva's sudden departure was unquestionably due to Miss Minerva herself.

Thus far, Carmina was able to think clearly—and no farther. The confused sense of helpless distress which she had felt, after reading the few farewell words that Frances had addressed to her, still oppressed her mind. There were moments when she vaguely understood, and bitterly lamented, the motives which had animated her unhappy friend. Other moments followed, when she impulsively resented the act which had thrown her on her own resources, at the very time when she had most

need of the encouragement that could be afforded by the sympathy of a firmer nature than her own. She began to doubt the steadiness of her resolution—without Frances to take leave of her, on the morning of the escape. For the first time, she was now tortured by distrust of Ovid's reception of her; by dread of his possible disapproval of her boldness; by morbid suspicion even of his taking his mother's part. Bewildered and reckless, she threw herself on the sofa—her heart embittered against Frances—indifferent whether she lived or died.

At dinner-time she sent a message, begging to be excused from appearing at the table. Mrs. Gallilee at once presented herself, harder and colder than ever, to inspect the invalid. Perceiving no immediate necessity for summoning Mr. Null, she said, 'Ring, if you want anything,' and left the room.

Mr. Gallilee followed, after an interval, with a little surreptitious offering of wine (hidden under his coat); and with a selection of tarts crammed into his pocket.

‘Smuggled goods, my dear,’ he whispered, ‘picked up when nobody happened to be looking my way. When we are miserable—has the idea ever occurred to you?—it’s a sign from kind Providence that we are intended to eat and drink. The sherry’s old, and the pastry melts in your mouth. Shall I stay with you? You would rather not? Just my feeling! Remarkable similarity in our opinions—don’t you think so yourself? I’m sorry for poor Miss Minerva. Suppose you go to bed?’

Carmina was in no mood to profit by this excellent advice.

She was still walking restlessly up and down her room, when the time came for shutting up the house. With the sound of closing locks and bolts, there was suddenly mingled a sharp

ring at the bell; followed by another unexpected event. Mr. Gallilee paid her a second visit—in a state of transformation. His fat face was flushed: he positively looked as if he was capable of feeling strong emotion, unconnected with champagne and the club! He presented a telegram to Carmina—and, when he spoke, there were thrills of agitation in the tones of his piping voice.

‘My dear, something very unpleasant has happened. I met Joseph taking this to my wife. Highly improper, in my opinion,—what do you say yourself?—to take it to Mrs. Gallilee, when it’s addressed to you. It was no mistake; he was so impudent as to say he had his orders. I have reproved Joseph.’ Mr. Gallilee looked astonished at himself, when he made this latter statement—then relapsed into his customary sweetness of temper. ‘No bad news?’ he asked anxiously, when Carmina opened the telegram.

‘Good news! the best of good news!’ she answered impetuously.

Mr. Gallilee looked as happy as if the welcome telegram had been addressed to himself. On his way out of the room, he underwent another relapse. The footman’s audacious breach of trust began to trouble him once more: this time in its relation to Mrs. Gallilee. The serious part of it was, that the man had acted under his mistress’s orders. Mr. Gallilee said—he actually said, without appealing to anybody—‘If this happens again, I shall be obliged to speak to my wife.’

The telegram was from Teresa. It had been despatched from Paris that evening; and the message was thus expressed:

‘Too tired to get on to England by to-night’s mail. Shall leave by the early train to-morrow morning, and be with you by six o’clock.’

Carmina's mind was exactly in the state to feel unmingled relief, at the prospect of seeing the dear old friend of her happiest days. She laid her head on the pillow that night, without a thought of what might follow the event of Teresa's return.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.







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